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## JUSTICE FOR GUSTAV MAHLER

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### I

TO play a symphony by Gustav Mahler has become about the most dangerous and thankless thing a New York conductor can do, if he has to reckon with the effect of his temerity on professional critical opinion. My proofs? Let me refer at random to three columns that appeared, some time ago, in the newspaper of which until recently Mr. Deems Taylor was the musical critic. These were headed, respectively, "The Mountain in Labor," "In Darkest Mahler," and "The Friends of Mahler." The first referred to the 3rd Mahler symphony, the second to the 7th, and the third to "Das Lied von der Erde." The following excerpts are informative:

"The third symphony . . . a work of almost unbelievable prolixity, dulness and sterility . . . contains only a few scattered passages worth taking seriously." "We fail to see why we should devote much precious space to saying that we found the work [the seventh symphony] to be emphatically the most stupid piece of music that we ever heard. . . . We could find no single musical idea that possessed a vestige of significance and vitality . . . themes . . . inconceivably banal and vulgar, development long-winded and inept, scoring scrappy, muddy and ineffective . . ." "Das Lied von der Erde . . . is the work of a composer who was pitifully destitute of the elements of greatness."

These are but small bits from one critic, but I could go on for pages quoting reports, lying at my elbow, of five or six others, equally eminent in their profession. Mr. Aldrich, for instance, states that "There are two composers New York will not listen to—Mahler and Berlioz," and "the seventh symphony . . . is the

final *reductio ad absurdum* of Mahler's pretensions to be a composer"; and Mr. Henderson believes that "the thematic material of the [seventh] symphony is mean beyond description."

Most assuredly critics are entitled to their annihilating opinions, but my complaint is that so much of their comment on Mahler's works is abusive rather than critical in tone. Furthermore, if Mr. Lawrence Gilman, as late as February 1924, says that "The Mahler question is as unsettled as ever," I protest that there existed no such mooted "Mahler question" in America until created by the critics themselves. As a member of both orchestras and audiences at many Mahler performances, I have never noticed any direct hostility among the hearers. Bewilderment there was (as also after the first performance of the "Eroica"); doubt, certainly; indifference, as there must always be. But there was also awe, respect and a decided amount of mere suspended judgment. The critics, however, have never given this suspended judgment a chance. Had they not smothered it, Mahler could take his place in the repertoire without any "question" whatever.

This process was, in fact, in a fair way to succeed up to 1921 when Mengelberg's too sanguine ardor unloosed the critical flood-gates. Previous to that no special opposition had been noticeable. The performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski of the Eighth Symphony (in 1916, I think) has been termed by Arthur Judson, who managed it, as the only symphonic venture of its kind in his recollection that made money. Six or seven performances were given in Philadelphia and New York; two or three sold-out houses for extra repetitions had to be cancelled on account of the sheer exhaustion of the chorus and orchestra. Dr. Muck's performance in 1918 of the Second (also choral) symphony is yet fresh in the memory of Boston enthusiasts, and Mengelberg's presentations of the Third and Seventh were quite enthusiastically received despite the assertion that only the performance, and not the music, justified the applause. Mengelberg in 1921 also brought out the First and Fourth symphonies to adequate receptions; it was only then that the anti-Mahler campaign gathered its forces and speedily acquired its present characteristics.

But, says the imperturbable connoisseur, isn't this just another magnifying of the molehill? Does not all music stand or fall, eventually, by its real merits, regardless of criticism? Against such languid Pollyanna sentiments it becomes necessary to demolish the superstition that Mahler, or any other serious composer for that matter, can make his way unaided.



Consider that Mahler has been dead only fourteen years. He composed serious music in the largest form—the symphony. His music depends on the largest orchestras for performance; it cannot be played effectively in reduced arrangements. Altogether, including “*Das Lied von der Erde*” there are nine symphonies and an unfinished tenth. The enormous resources, including substantial choruses, demanded in at least three of them, limit the number ordinarily easy to perform to five. They are without exception longer than most symphonies, and conceived in so deliberately introspective a style that at least two or three hearings are necessary before even a well-disposed musician can grasp them. As matters stand at present, the average frequency of Mahler performances is something less than one in two years, and this estimate leaves out some orchestras which do not play him at all. Since his music is of the type that must first seem erudite and complex before it can appear emotional, it depends upon time and repetition for general appreciation.

Beethoven, it is admitted, is great. So is Brahms. So also Wagner and Debussy. Yet how many of these secured the undisputed standing they enjoy to-day when their works were first being presented? Mr. Ernest Newman notwithstanding, it is fairly established that all were at first more or less opposed, criticized, even vilified by influential contemporary opinion. Moreover, the acceptance of all their works is by no means admitted to-day. Is Beethoven’s triple concerto considered a masterpiece? Or his trios for strings alone? How much emotional pleasure does the average concert-goer derive from some of the last quartets, say the op. 135, or the fugue, both of which may be considered “musicians’ music” beyond much dispute? What about Debussy’s “*Jeux*,” or his second-rate Prix de Rome composition, “*La Demoiselle Éluë*”? And what is the general opinion of Brahms’ earlier chamber-music, and of “*Rienzi*”? These are mere suggestions, not especially comprehensive or conclusive, but when one considers the elasticity of judgment granted the generally accepted masters, it becomes ridiculous to deny the same privileges to the consideration of Mahler.

Enough has been said to justify the assertion that Mahler is a man who must be reckoned with. His symphonies are tremendous. They demand a patient and studious approach. It is absurd to condemn them on account of their length. Their form is often different from the traditional symphony of three or four movements; the third, for example, has six. The music itself makes little effort to ingratiate, although it often does so uncon-

sciously. While abounding in graceful and poignant episodes, it seldom evinces any responsibility to sustain them. The most significant feature of these symphonies, in fact, is the introspective character that utterly disclaims any intention of architectural simplicity. In this particular lies the crux of the whole Mahler matter, and it is astounding that so few seem to recognize that Mahler did not try to establish competition with other composers, but merely invited the hearer to share his own musical adventures.

Such an invitation should be enough for anyone who pretends to be a musician. It should also suffice the lay-listener, because the specifics of composer-craft are beyond him anyway. And since the mere trading of contentious opinions is of doubtful use in trying to show the worth of a composer, it is essential to bring simple goodwill to the task of stating the qualifications of the perfect Mahlerite and the attitude by which Mahler can be enjoyed.

I purposely forbear to make use of existing critical and biographical documents. It is not unlikely that the enthusiastic study of Mahler by Paul Stefan is influenced by the peculiarly idolatrous taint of all priesthood; a quality that should be everlastingly opposed and which I wish could be altogether eliminated from musical history. Stefan is the most authoritative writer on Mahler, but his book is not unguilty of the "Pathetic Fallacy." Romain Rolland, most catholic of French critics, even in opposition to Mahler contrives to maintain comparative fairness; but his article in "Musicians of To-day" proves that he lacked the patience to make him sympathetic. My business, as I see it, is to suggest rather than to shout; to prepare, if possible, rather than to dogmatize.

Mahler was first a man of simple faith and ingenuousness. The fact that he chose to make use of humanitarian psychology in the programs of his symphonies establishes him at once as one of the composers to whom music meant transcribed emotion quite as much as pure sound. Mengelberg's placing of Mahler beside Bach and Beethoven in a new triumvirate of Titans is therefore conceivably consistent. Aside from the mere quality of music, there is a peculiar similarity in the æsthetic pronouncements of these three. Bach's life was humility itself, filled with polite dedications and religious fervor. Beethoven, though far more robust and capable of fury, followed with a continuation of the Bach uplift-politic; what other explanation accounts for the constant effort to ennoble, to crystallize elemental feelings, that literally pours from his greatest music? And likewise did Mahler

propose to paint human life in its simplest relations and qualities. It is, of course, permissible to shrug the shoulders and lament the lack of fine distinctions of sophistication in these men while insisting, as is often done, that in spite of themselves their music is more authentic speech than their precepts. But that widespread practice only begs the question after all; the composer always has the right to record the sources of his inspiration.

So, when we come to examine Mahler the man, we are, if we wish it, close on the track of understanding, and subsequently appreciating, his music. No composer sits down deliberately to write a two-and-a-half-hour symphony for the fun of it, or for popularity and frequent performances. He has a more serene purpose: courage is his most outstanding quality. Not to make a short, titilliant "sure-fire" piece, as nearly all contemporary composers are doing, by the way; but to follow his idea faithfully from one end to the other is his real business, and if he is sincere he sticks to it. He is not responsible to anyone but himself, and he is false to that important being if he flinch, or plot the facile success. In fulfilling this particular ideal Mahler is, with the possible exception of Bruckner, the most sublimely courageous and unspoiled personality in the history of music.

So much for his purpose; now for the specifics of his craft. Mahler is accused of sterility, disjointedness, prolixity; of fragmentary themes, banality, plagiarism, padding, mere noise: a large order, in all conscience. It is necessary to combat every word in this list separately, although one suspects that the anti-Mahlerite suffers principally from unwillingness and inability to surrender to the personality of the composer. If prejudice be left behind and one listen to absorb rather than to criticize, the sterility becomes a picture of desperate human futility, the disjointedness a transcription of painful human struggle, the prolixity an attest of the long and wearisome road to some spiritual orientation. When these convictions are gradually borne in on one, Mahler is seen as a man who has done something entirely new with musical mediums—something that perhaps only Bruckner approached before him—the creating of a musical fabric by means of ungilded realistic psychology, with as much emphasis on the unprepossessing as on the charming. This is more faithful depicting of life than a simple panorama where everything may be labeled and is as easy to understand as a variety-show.

The remainder of the catalogue of *contras* is of technical import only; yet they are inextricably related to the creative psychology of the whole, and the Mahlerite, searching for a

solution, must realize this. The "fragmentary themes" are like iterated suggestions of moods, which in life are by no means always complete and clearly charted. The "banality" is often purposeful—musical transference of oft-felt stupidities and cheapenings. The plagiarism indictment is a joke, and indeed a poor one: such few chance resemblances as occur in Mahler are certainly as innocuous as many others in better-known symphonists. Arthur Sullivan's famous *riposte* is apposite here: "My dear sir, you must remember that I and Mr. X— had but seven notes to work with!" In substance or outline Mahler has never plagiarized to the slightest degree. "Padding?" Well, there is padding in Beethoven, although it is *lèse majesté* to say so. "Mere noise?" Mahler was capable, as is well known, of terrific passion and fervor, and it is not strange that once in a while he dwells a little longer on some stupendous effect than the dull and timid temperament can stand. "Inability to sustain a mood"—but I have already suggested that his "moods" relate conjointly to his huge introspective emotional schemes.

There remains the matter of orchestration. Even that is belittled in New York, and yet Mahler's instrumentation is altogether as distinctive as that of any major symphonist of the last fifty years. *Pax* to the classicists, we have four prominent figures in orchestral progress: Wagner, Mahler, Strauss and Debussy. I do not include Stravinsky because his music, though legitimate, is not essentially for the concert-hall. Strauss and Debussy are practically self-developed in their best work. Wagner absorbed Liszt, and Mahler to some extent Bruckner; but in either case the successor moulded himself a *genre* that cannot be imitated short of actual copying. The work of d'Indy, Rubin Goldmark and a host of lesser composers proves the Wagner contention beyond dispute; the imitation of Mahler would be equally apparent. His uses of certain combinations are unique. His massed clarinet- and oboe-chords; his shrieks of close-packed reeds, with appoggiaturas to every note of the chord; his development of the possibilities of the E-flat clarinet—only Strauss in "Eulenspiegel" and "Heldenleben" has equalled it; his introduction of tortuous string *glissandi* before any other composer was doing it, and with manner and effect totally different from the more familiar exponents of that trick, Debussy and Ravel; his novel effects of pure devastating ugliness; his unforgettable ingenuity in what might be termed *leit*-rhythms; his unerring choice of the definitive tone-quality to express a certain needed emotion—let any other composer so much as dare to employ Mahler's technique literally,

and even Mr. Deems Taylor would be reduced to crying "Thief!"

The Mahlerite hears these things, measures them, and kindles. He knows his patience may be tried, but the rich and constantly varying pageant atones for its length. He accepts that length because it constitutes the height and breadth of the man himself. He finds the short ephemeral melodic phrases more piquant for their sheer unreliability, their chance blossoming amid the realistic seriousness; he appreciates their exquisite individuality all the better because they are not always logically and inevitably developed. He likes the casual wandering, because it spells life to him. Mahler can do as much with three isolated measures of snatch-melody as Strauss with three pages of polyphony. What is that phrase that both haunts and taunts you just because it is not "finished," because you can't quite see it? Well, it is no less than the flower your friend's automobile did not stop for you to pick, or the chance girl who stepped into the subway train you just missed. Must life be all fulfilment?

But aside from such particular fancies, delightful as he makes them, Mahler does not always elect to play with nebulous emotions. The shorter movements are often the epitome of grace and line. To cite a few: The grotesque dead-march in the first symphony; the second and third movements of the second, one an exquisite *Ländler*-like piece and the other a boisterous Viennese scherzo; the flower-movement of the third symphony, and its tense exordium that serves as a finale; the *Totentanz* of the fourth, the string-serenade of the fifth, the *Nachtmusik* of the seventh and the intervening *Schattenhaft*. For delicacy and refinement some of these movements are unsurpassed in all musical literature. In fact, the education that must accompany growing attention to Mahler can be confined almost entirely to the long movements which at first seem not to speak for themselves.

Finally, taken as a whole, the Mahler symphonies are majestic in their scope and magnificence. There is a herculean achievement there which never goes unnoticed even by an audience made half hostile in advance. When the third symphony, a titanic two-and-a-half-hour production, was ended, blank silence was the first reaction. Frankly, the audience could not analyse its emotion—and small blame to it. The sheer magnitude stunned. But a few seconds later came the realization that whether it had understood or not, it had heard a work nearly unparalleled in force of utterance. The applause burst forth in storms (there had fortunately been no *advance* criticisms!) and the vindication of the

insistent Mengelberg was accomplished as well as that of Mahler's frenetic devotion. If that tremendous symphony had left the audience tongue-tied and paralysed it would have had its justification. With the others, most of which are shorter than the mammoth third, less handicap in the matter of endurance is to be encountered. With repeated hearings they will unfold the more easily, and it need not be long before the definite episodes reshape themselves like old friends and the more distended portions throw off a readier emotional glamour. For variety the listener need not fear. That is why Mahler's symphonies are so fascinating. You never know what to expect.

## II

The foregoing portion of this article, despite its generous allowance of affirmations, has been mostly concerned with an endeavor to refute the prejudice with which Mahler's works have had to contend in America. There remains the necessity of completing the explanation of Mahler's sources and the plain duty of listing those conductors who have assumed the more or less thankless task of presenting his works. To dispose first of the latter task, it may be recorded that in addition to the greatest Mahler interpreter, Mengelberg, symphonies of Mahler have been performed by Muck, Monteux, Stokowski, Stock, Gabrilowitsch, Bodanzky and Bruno Walter, all within the last decade. If there be others, I have not had recourse to the proof and so am unable to include them. Muck, to my knowledge, gave the second and fifth; Monteux and Walter the first (both during the season of 1923-1924); Gabrilowitsch the first; Stokowski the eighth as previously recorded; while Stock of the Chicago orchestra has the most impressive list available, including the following performances, in pairs: three of the fourth, three of the seventh (including its first performance in America), one of the first, one of the fifth, three special performances of the eighth (a special music-festival), and also Mahler's "*Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen*" (Songs of a Travelling Journeyman); all since 1914. Bodanzky repeatedly performed "*Das Lied von der Erde*" and the fourth symphony. Mengelberg has given the first four and the seventh, and we may hope for the others in due time.

It is worthy of comment that the performances of Mahler outside of New York are no such breeders of controversy. While it would be of course idle to maintain that the audiences of Detroit, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago are much more aware of Mahler's



worth than those of Manhattan, it is obvious that, as long as the critics of these other communities discuss the symphonies without rancor and accept them, whether approved or not, as entitled at least to the occasional presentations they receive, their hearers have a much better chance of learning to listen to and appreciate them than the New Yorkers to whom on every possible occasion Mahler has been portrayed as a musical hypochondriac, delinquent and bore. Boston and Chicago at least take their Mahler without questioning; and it is undoubtedly an advantage, as also in Philadelphia, for the critics to honor their conductors enough to keep personal contentions largely absent from their articles. When Muck and Monteux and Stock have given Mahler symphonies, their reputations and beliefs have not been impugned to any noticeable extent, whereas in New York Mengelberg has been treated rather roughly because he has insistently and doggedly adhered to his opinion that Mahler is one of the greatest. As for Pierre Monteux and Bruno Walter, they were raked over the coals because they were intrepid enough each to give the first symphony a hearing in the same season. Walter was censured for not playing a different symphony of Mahler's; and Monteux for daring as the leader of an outside organization to insult omniscient New York (just as it was becoming well-trained in anti-Mahlerism) by playing Mahler at all. I, on the contrary, felt like extending both Messrs. Monteux and Walter a token of gratitude for allowing me to hear twice in a few weeks a work I had never been able before to listen to, and had played in only once.

To complete the consideration of Mahler's sources involves the bestowing of due credit on the editor of this magazine. Having been unable for more or less obvious reasons to publish even in shorter form this article in other supposedly suitable places, I entered into editorial correspondence with Mr. Sonneck, who saw the fairness of my proposition to present the other side of the "Mahler-question" and suggested that I do so more comprehensively than in the article as originally submitted to him. During the correspondence Mr. Sonneck also thought fit to acquaint me with some of his own convictions, which I reproduce here almost verbatim, since they are forcefully and convincingly stated:

Among the aspects of Mahler's art is one which, in my humble opinion, is essential for its understanding: that is, the spirit of the German folk-song. Mahler was saturated with the romanticism of "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" and practically all of his music echoes that influence in one way or another. If an auditor has no knowledge or

spiritual connection with that romanticism he will never be able really to appreciate Mahler entirely. In our country that particular German romanticism is an unknown sphere, except among a comparatively few individuals. Therefore the key to [one] secret of Mahler's art is missing; or rather, without that key it becomes much more difficult to understand what is an essential part of Mahler's ideals and their expression. That is really the principal reason why in Central Europe and Holland Mahler's music sounds at home and strikes such a sympathetic note in the listeners. Inversely, it is why it is so difficult to transplant and export Mahler to any other country.

The folk-music spirit accounts for much in Mahler's music that the opposition considers banal, for the simple reason that much of the folk-music of all nations has frequently an element of banality about it. Because certain outstanding folk-melodies are perfect gems of beauty, too many people have the opinion that every folk-song is beautiful. That is not at all true. Many a folk-song is genuine, but at the same time it is esthetically ordinary and reflects the banality of the "folk" crowd or individual in that crowd. Embracing humanity as he saw it, Mahler was in that respect a realistic idealist. He did not embellish the folk-spirit, but reflected it in his music as it actually is, and in my opinion it is a virtue and not a defect in Mahler that at times he did not shrink from a refined sort of banality when his ideas demanded it. Unless one keeps the German folk-song in mind which he so loved and tried to reflect faithfully, though racially not a Nordic, one loses, for instance, the point in one of his symphonies [the third] where he pictures the psychology of the surging crowd and injects suddenly the tune of "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden." When that symphony was performed in New York, hardly any of the critics seemed to know what that fairly banal tune was. The critics merely heard a banal tune and took it for granted that it was a tune of Mahler's own, injected by him without rhyme or reason.

Finally, Mahler cannot be understood fully unless one sees in him an antipode of Richard Strauss. Both are programme-composers, but Strauss in the main is a naturalistic program-composer, whereas Mahler is a psychological program-composer. In Richard Strauss the pictorial element of the program dominates that of the mood, while in Mahler the pictorial element is subservient to a portrayal of psychic states.

The main point as to Mahler's affiliation with the folk-music spirit is well taken and is undoubtedly important. Disclaiming any desire to use these evident facts as a basis for argument, I must, however, state that while subscribing fully to them I nevertheless feel it even more important to point out that the concert-going public should learn the necessity of looking further than explanatory notes and historical data and create for themselves a conquest of that laziness of mind which relies upon specific information for its comfort and stimulation. The enjoyment of music is and must remain largely an individual matter, even among musicians, and true satisfaction can seldom result unless the music

has the power to evoke either visions or moods. What I have already pointed out is that the critics have damned Mahler so heartily that the layman could scarcely be expected to dare believe there was anything worth his consideration; and what I have tried to show is that preserving receptive ingenuousness will enable the same layman to keep his ears and mind open until the evocative power of Mahler's music gradually comes home to him. In discussing the German folk-music element in Mahler I would not go so far as to say, with Mr. Sonneck, that without a spiritual kinship with it one could not appreciate Mahler;<sup>1</sup> but at the same time I would go farther and say that the spirit of *universal* folk-music should appear and appeal to anyone with decently developed æsthetics and should set up thereby a means of mutual communication that should clarify both Mahler's purpose and the auditor's emotions.

Similarly, the question of Mahler's antipodal difference from Richard Strauss, though absolutely true, seems to me incidental rather than imperative. To realize the psychic programs of Mahler is not, I think, necessarily dependent upon recognizing the naturalistic programs of Strauss.<sup>2</sup> The latter are obvious; but not less so than the former. The quintessence of the matter is that throughout the gamut of human responses to art the pictorial has always had the advantage over the psychic, upon the same principle that sends ten persons to the movies where one prefers a book. When it is realized that the Straussian pageants have had in recent years from the standpoint of frequency of performance at least treble that 10-to-1 advantage over the Mahlerian introspections, I find it necessary only to reaffirm my original conviction, that given a proportionate number of presentations, Mahler would hold his own in any repertoire.

This article, it happens, was practically completed before the final Philharmonic program of 1924-1925, when Mengelberg gave his excellent and definitive performance of Mahler's second symphony. I therefore take the liberty of inserting a reference to an unheard-of phenomenon which then occurred. Mr. Pitts Sanborn inserted, or caused to be inserted, in the columns of the New York Telegram-Mail a short paragraph to the effect that after the first performance of such a work it was obvious that no critic could do it justice, and bade his readers wait until after the

<sup>1</sup>I did not say that; I said "to appreciate Mahler *entirely*."—O. G. S

<sup>2</sup>I did not mean that; I meant that Mahler cannot be understood as a program-composer, if one listens to his music from the same angle as to that of Richard Strauss.—O. G. S.

repetition of the concert. Following this repetition there appeared in the *Telegram-Mail* of Monday, April 6, the first temperate criticism of Mahler it has been my pleasure to see in a New York newspaper during the last five years. In it Pitts Sanborn spoke admiringly of the salient beauties of the symphony, and very reservedly of parts he did not like or understand. He terminated his article, moreover, with the observation that, no matter whether the entire symphony had seemed admirable or not (which he wisely forbore to establish categorically), at least the audience had heard under Mengelberg a performance of unexampled fidelity and competence, and added that he for one was musically the richer for having been present on so momentous an occasion! That was criticism! As far as my memory serves me, it was the only critical article or concert-report about Mahler that ever contained evidence of a New York critic's realization of the necessity of a second guess. I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Sanborn's unusual venture into the contemplative constituted a milestone along the path of Mahler-critiques, and if he will follow it up by performing at least as temperately when the much-reviled Bruckner begins to come into his own, he will have made his position unique and can retire with a clear conscience.

And now, having held forth belligerently as befitted the necessity of the problem, I wish before concluding to dismiss comparisons and controversies and to substitute what of belief and serenity my professional life as a musician has allowed me to retain. I have no desire longer to appear remote, as another critic merely. I am neither pretending omniscience nor professing priesthood. As for my fitness to be a Mahler advocate, it has no other origin than a slow course of personal acquaintance with Mahler's work as a participating musician who happens to be literate—fortunately or unfortunately the reader must decide for himself. I have played so far in five of these symphonies and have besides heard a sixth (as well as listening to two performances of the first). I, too, began by being doubtful of certain apparent banalities; I was not beyond the indiscretion of separating phrases, and carping at this or that. But (perhaps because I am a musician) my incipient indifference or enmity was ever and again arrested by some novel orchestral effect, startling rhythm, hauntingly graceful melody or significant figure; and I bade myself wait and consider. By the time the necessary five or six rehearsals were over, I found myself sucked into the current and inoculated with its contagious power. The concerts were usually the first uninterrupted performance—we seldom in the Philharmonic had time

for a general rehearsal of Mahler—and in no case did I experience disappointment or misgivings after they were over. The line of the whole remained intact, as one might look back at a mountain or an experience. A man had said something and I had heard; sincerity was in every utterance, and an enormous purpose pervaded all. It was humanity revealed, with no lies, no extenuations, no hypocrisy, no omissions. Beauty shone out fully as often as it does in human affairs; banality was there to torture, and disappointment to corrode. It was all in the music—one felt in Mahler a kinship to the oracular confessor, Walt Whitman: "I am the man—I suffered, I was there." What more, I submit, than the power to reveal one's self as a student, portrayer, and liver of life is needed to stamp the owner of that power with the seal of authentic artist?

And because I, too, had known the struggles, intimate terrors and exigencies of the composer and had literally bedded, night after night, with the merciless passion of affirmation, so hideously difficult to subdue and so painfully broken to worthy use, it became easy for me to understand the relentless fervors which, we have ample evidence, drove Mahler all his life, and found the particular sort of expression the symphonies present. That, however, is unimportant except insofar as it provides a bridge to my concluding plea to the music lover: Life is not by any means the joke or the pastime that we constantly try to make it. In it we try to minimize misfortune, to flee dulness, to forget grief, to deny defeat. Being but mortal, however, we seldom if ever succeed totally in annulling the effects of any of these, and if we remove ourselves by various gallant or cowardly stratagems from their influence, we none the less tend to become superficial despite the comparative safety of our doubtfully-bought deliverance. It was undoubtedly Mahler's appreciation of the complexity of human affairs that enabled him to go so deliberately and courageously about the business of reproducing his understanding by his particular musical medium. My parting adjuration, therefore, is for audiences to consider the spirit of these remarks when next they listen to a Mahler symphony. To condemn wholly an artist before one understands his sources and purpose is to write oneself down an undeserver of the benefits that art confers.

## DO ANIMALS LIKE MUSIC?

By EDWARD ELLSWORTH HIPSHER

**T**O begin with, I am thinking more particularly of *four-legged* animals—which eliminates such as attend subscription concerts in order that at the next club meeting they may gush, "I do think the *Symphony in G-minor* is just the *cutest* thing that Mozart ever wrote!"

However, I shall not overlook our cheerful friends of the woodland whose *fore-legs* have developed plumed quills, through which they became the original *aéroplanes*. I shall even include our domestic and patient bearer of burdens whom one of our clever humorists described as "The most curious of all birds—having two legs to walk with, two legs to kick with, and its wings on the sides of its head." I shall introduce as witnesses also some of those crawling creatures with whom Mother Eve became all too familiar. For, diverse as are their forms and instincts, all of these, and others, have given their sometimes quaintly expressed testimony.

And now, relieved of this short prologue, the Interlocutor will retire up-stage while some young friends "do their turns" with tales, several of which fairly out-Æsop Æsop. For this is to be neither a report of nor conclusions drawn from first-personal observations, but, rather, an offering of gleanings from a broadcast correspondence.

This communication was exclusively with juniors; that is, with young folk who had not yet reached their sixteenth anniversary. From fifty-eight of these—sprinkled irregularly over territory outlined by Maine, Florida, Texas, California and South Dakota—have been received messages telling of the musical likes and dislikes of their animal friends. And surprises were by no means rare. For who would have chosen a Flying-squirrel as a being with a distinct musical taste, or would have sought among musical dilettanti for the grotesque Penguin?

Before pursuing the more interesting consideration of the musical bias of individuals, a short summary may act as appetiser to the feast. Thus, in the fifty-eight letters to which allusion has been made, it is just mildly surprising to note that eleven cats and thirteen dogs are mentioned individually as having a distinct



liking for music; while eight dogs and but one puss showed a noticeable dislike for it. The dairyman adds to the stock in his pail, and the poultryman coaxes more eggs from "Biddy," by sweet strains of music. The spider ceases its spinning to listen to the flute, while the fantastic penguins are outraged by jazz.

To be a little more specific, the animals of our more familiar "house group," as would have been surmised, led in attention. Of these the dog stands foremost as a subject of notice. A full baker's dozen of these showed a real liking for music; while eight seemed to have a distaste for at least certain types of it. More interesting is the fact that six had a sufficiently keen esthetic sense to discriminate in styles of music; and, what is really astonishing, they shamed their masters by invariably showing a preference for the better class of art.

May Godsey of Tennessee writes without the faintest question in her mind: "I once had a little dog. When I would be practicing my lesson or playing for the pleasure of it, he would come in the room, sit down beside the piano, and was a very attentive 'audience.' He seemed to enjoy every note of the pieces." With equal assurance, eleven years old Melda Haynes of Nebraska tells us that "Our dog will come to the piano whenever he is in the house and hears me playing. He comes and sits down on the pedals, puts his head next to the piano, and sits very quietly as if listening carefully."

Just a little different in effect is the report of Ernestine Buck, fourteen, of Texas: "This little puppy would lie on the porch by the open door and listen to my playing on the piano. When I would pause he would prick up his ears, raise his head, and look through the screen at me. And when I commenced again he would lay his head back down and sleep contentedly." Then, that a dog may go even beyond the mere enjoyment of listening to music is hinted when Emma B. Crozin of Philadelphia writes, "I played the piano and my friend began to sing. The dog came over to its master, pressed its face near him, and made low sounds in its throat. It kept this up until my friend stopped singing. They told me the dog tries to imitate music every time he hears it."

A sense of discrimination enters into the letter of Lillie Whiteman of California: "Whenever I begin to play the piano, my little puppy comes and begs to be taken up in my lap. There she will listen quite content through the soft parts; but when I play loud, she makes known her displeasure by jumping down and running off." Then Richard Hawkins of Missouri tells how the tone-quality of different instruments arouses varying sensations: "Our

Airedale comes up to the door and howls pitifully when I play the clarinet; but he never howls when I play the piano." Dog's ears seem very sensitive to loud sounds and to those inclined to shrillness in pitch or quality. This may be but a natural adjunct to their peculiar acuteness of hearing.

In the same strain, Mary J. Ganley, eleven, also of Missouri, says, "My dog likes music very much, because when I go to play the piano he always runs and jumps and barks; but when my uncle gets his violin to play with me, he, the dog, always runs away. He does not like my uncle to play with me. He does not like the violin at all." And from Mary L. Quinlan, twelve, of Philadelphia: "We had a dog which would protest by howling every time I played the piano. After a short time he seemed to have gotten used to it, but he never showed any signs of liking music."

But, judged by averages, Puss leaves Towser out of scenting distance as a "concert-fan." Eleven of these are reported as having a distinct interest in or even love for music. Four went so far as to walk on the piano-keys, seemingly to hear their tones. One learned to like music; one learned to play the piano; and but one showed a dislike for music.

That Pussy has an ear for "sweet harmonious sounds" could scarcely be doubted when reading from Eva Johnson of Missouri: "Last summer when I would begin practicing my music lesson, if the cat, Tabby, were in the house, he would run and jump up in my lap and there he would lie until I finished, purring happily. If he were outside when the piano started, he would climb up on the screen door and 'meow' to be let in.

"He seemed to be particularly fond of soft, low music; and that is the kind which appeals to the better nature of humans."

Even more interesting is the report of Bert Shoemaker of Indiana: "I have a true story to relate of a beautiful Angora cat named Kitty Pat, owned by my aunt who teaches music. When the pupils came to take their lessons, he would go and lie down behind the piano bench, before they got their wraps off, and prepare for a good fill of music. He would purr so loudly that both teacher and pupil would have to stop and laugh. This cat showed in various ways that he dearly loved music."

Then Ella Calkins, twelve, of New York writes similarly, "I once had a small white kitten which, when I was playing, would lie on a cushion near me on the piano bench. It would turn its head and prick its ears just as if it liked it and wished to know the name of the piece. Whenever Snow-drop would hear the piano it would come running and with a bound was on the bench beside me."

A little more musical intelligence is ascribed by Vera Southwell, also of New York: "I have a kitten named Tiger, who sits upon the seat beside me when I practice or play. It makes me try to do my best when pussy looks at me so intelligently. She occasionally walks over the keys at night in an effort to imitate me." And it is just a little singular to find three other writers mentioning their cats' habit of walking on the piano keys at night. A diverting bit of feline psychology.

A bit more uniquely, Julia Montgomery of Maryland reports that "Just a few evenings ago I had several of my girl friends in and one of them brought her mandolin. When she began to play, our cat jumped into my mother's lap, reached up with her paws, patting her with first one then the other on her neck and cheeks, purring all the time and really seemed to try to talk. And when my little sister plays her mouth organ, Kitty jumps up in her lap and seems to be so happy. Sometimes when we are practicing our music lesson, we put Kitty on the music shelf of the piano. She will sit there and seem so content, now and then reaching down to play with our fingers with her paw. If she did not like the music, she would certainly jump down and run away."

That a cat may have a change of heart, musically, is evidenced by Doris M. Evans of Connecticut: "We once had a cat who was afraid of the piano. Before he got killed he had got used to it and would sit beside it and listen while I played."

Most interesting of all, however, is the tale of eleven years old Dorothy Nye of Maine. Her kitten must have been not only a lover of music but also quite clever mentally. "When my kitten, 'Bobbykins,' was very small he used to sit in mamma's lap while she practiced and seemed to enjoy the music very much. One day mamma thought she could teach him to play himself. Every one thought this was foolish, but within a week he could play alone. He is the only cat I ever have heard of that could do this. His trick is fourfold: First he is requested to play the upper part of the piano; then in the lower part; third, to hold his tones; and fourth, to look at his notes. He always responds and will play anywhere. He has traveled over much of Maine and is now thirteen years old. He will also shake hands with anybody."

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Birds are the Natural musicians of Dame Nature's household. The male bird woos his mate by song; in which, beneath his lady's leafy bower, he became the original Troubadour. Eleven letters

mentioned their native disposition to sing; while seven tell of some particular showing of an appreciation of music other than their own.

Ernestine Buck of Texas writes enthusiastically, "Canaries and other birds sing joyfully when they hear music. I absolutely know this to be a fact from my personal experiences. We had a pair of canaries two or three years ago, for about a year; and during this time I found them to be musical as most canaries are. My sister who plays the piano and violin would play lively pieces to get the canaries happy when they would be fighting. At once, and especially when she would play up in the treble, the male canary would almost split his throat singing. I, also, would play to get the canaries to stop fighting and go to singing. . . . Lots of times, I or my sister will be playing, in the spring or summer mainly, and in the morning when things are cool and the sun is not yet hot enough to be uncomfortable, the birds will gather in the trees outside our open door and sing joyfully as long as one of us is playing—Mocking-birds, sparrows, and other species of birds."

How music cured the homesickness of her caged pets is told by Germaine Dubois of Maine. "Three birds suddenly became silent in their new home. . . . Their cage was taken to a room where music was heard a part of the day. At once a change came over them; they soon resumed their warbling and thereafter gave signs of contentment whenever the piano was heard."

The little bird of Meldon C. Collins of New York surely was a devoted amateur: "A little pet bird showed a love for soft, sweet music, either vocal or instrumental, and would sit and sing on the collar or shoulder of the player, as if its little throat would burst."

A musical studio in any tree-top might be discovered if only we had the ears of twelve-year-old Alice M. Raggenhouse of Pennsylvania, who writes, "I happened to be passing under a large tree when I heard a sound which startled me. I listened again—yes—there it was, something which sounded like a treble note, followed by a long, gurgling trill. It was a mother bird teaching her young to sing. This incident impressed me very much as it had every reason to show that animals and birds enjoy their own music, as we enjoy a good musical concert or opera."

The snake-charmer's use of music is rather commonly known; but it is just a little astonishing to learn that our wily creeping neighbors have a real ear for sweet melody. Reginald Morris of North Carolina tells how "A large snake ran up the wall and into a

hole over the porch, and my father played the harp, which caused the snake repeatedly to put its head out where it could see and hear. While a number of shots were fired with a pistol, trying to kill the snake; each time the music would bring the snake out again."

That they may have a discriminating sense of sound and rhythm is indicated by Barbara Delle Simmons of Arkansas when she writes, "Last summer in the mountains an old hermit played the grind-organ. His pet rattlesnakes would lie peacefully in their cage while he played 'Abide With Me'; but when he played 'Hot Time in the Old Town' they writhed around and almost stood up."

One of the most interesting episodes of the whole correspondence came in a letter from Mary Cramer of Iowa: "In a grass field, just across the way, are a number of snakes. Every afternoon when the piano was used, a big snake would come to that side of the house and lie there curled up until the music ceased. . . . Once our pianist went on a two weeks vacation trip. The piano was untouched and the snake was never around. As soon as she returned and resumed her music, the snake also returned."

Notice of the monkey's apparent interest in music was made by ten writers. All, in substance, wrote, if not so picturesquely, yet not unlike Geraldine Brown of Georgia: "The little monkey perched upon the shoulder of the Italian street walker begins to step lively as soon as the organ strikes up a screechy tune." Which, after all, is mostly and usually a taught trick or an imitation of the master.

From the clever simian to the stolid mule is a prodigious leap; and yet of the two the plodding hinny shows the more lively musical intelligence. Again quoting from Barbara Delle Simmons of Arkansas, "When we drove down the mountainside the mules traveled more quietly while we all sang pretty songs; but when there was no singing, they seemed to travel roughly." And Richard Hawkins, again, gives an interesting family reminiscence: "My father says he remembers very distinctly a mule his grandfather had, which, whenever the organ was played, would come up from the field and stand as close to the house as he could. When the music ceased, the mule, 'Sampson,' would return to the field."

The mischievous mouse has, also, a taste in matters musical, as ten-year-old Reginald Morris of North Carolina has noticed. "Once while my sister was playing the violin a mouse came out of a hole in the wall and sat and listened attentively, apparently unafraid, and much charmed by the high notes of the violin." To this Lois Dee Flanagan of Mississippi adds, "In the middle of

her (sister's) piece she looked in one corner of the room and there sat a small mouse watching her play."

The "larger cousins" of the *Mus* family seem to have the more highly developed taste for music, according to Martha Lee of Pennsylvania. "I have a white rat, and one evening after I had it for a while, it was on the piano stool. I went over to the piano and started to practice my lesson. The rat stood up on its hind legs and leaped to the piano. It sat there like it was charmed. It seemed to get not close enough to the melody. The rat sat there until I had finished my lesson. The minute I stopped playing, he ran under the cushions of the arm-chair. The rat loves to hear music."

Lawrence Quill of Kentucky evidently has been crossing the river to the Cincinnati Zoölogical Garden. He begins, "Bands often are hired by rich people in big cities to play for the animals of the Zoo. At first when they hear strange sounds produced by the different instruments they are inclined to run away and hide. But bye and bye they come back and listen intently to it and show signs of delight."

The "Moo-cow" would scarcely qualify as a *prima donna* at the Opéra Animal; and yet she seems to be the most practically responsive of the domestic group to "the concord of sweet sounds." Julia Montgomery of Maryland tells us that "It was quite noticeable that when he (Daddy) whistled and sang she (the cow) would stand more still and seemed more content. . . . Daddy would often say when he came in with the milk—'Well, just see what a full foamy pail of milk Lady gave this morning. I sang all the time I was milking.'" And Alice Wilcox of Pennsylvania "choirs the same sweet strain."

Alice Biggin of New Jersey writes, "The cows were in the meadow near the house and I was playing the piano. While I was playing, the cows seemed quiet and stood still; but when I stopped they seemed restless and noisy." Then Geraldine Brown of Georgia turns practical by telling that "In one of the largest and most perfectly equipped dairies in this country, the proprietor has installed Victrolas which are played every morning and afternoon at milking time, because it has been proven beyond a doubt that the cows will let down their milk better while listening to sweet strains of music."

Though Germaine Dubois of Maine writes, "My brother says that the horse he mounted during the last war could not be reined in whenever it heard the military band"; and Mary J. Ganley of Missouri mentions, "In a parade horses keep time to the music";



these would seem to be but instances of association and training. Even Dorothy Grobmyer of Arkansas fails to establish any love for music by "In war a band always accompanies the cavalry because music has a stimulating effect on the horses as well as the men." Perhaps there is a certain phase of enjoyment in this "stimulating effect," than which there is scarcely a more distinctive suggestion when Julia Montgomery, again, writes, "Daddy often walked out through the pasture on Sundays, where the horses were resting. Whenever he whistled and sang, the horses would stop grazing, toss their heads, frolic and romp across the fields behind him." All of which seems just a little strange, considering the long and almost intimate association of men and horses.

"Chickens must also like music, as they sing a great deal," writes Doris M. Evans of Connecticut. And doubtless many rural readers will recall times when a healthy "biddy" in the warm spring sun has sung in a tone more nearly human than that of any other bird.

A sympathetic reaction of the chicken to music is suggested by Evelyn Giddings of New Jersey, in "A farmer lived near us. Every day he used to put a small Victrola in the chicken coop to liven the chickens so that they would lay more eggs." But the hen with a real taste for music is reported by Alice Wilcox of Pennsylvania: "When I was small we had an old hen who would watch her chance for the door to be left open and she would go in and lay an egg on the bed, then fly over to the piano and walk back and forth on the keys to make music. . . . Once when we were coming home from a visit we heard someone playing. . . . When we got inside we found the hen on the piano walking back and forth on the keys."

Because they are probably the least domestic of any animals noticed, as well as because their musical taste seemed quite well pronounced, the curious little Flying-squirrel has been retained for the last consideration. Annie Louise Hall of Mississippi wrote, "Soon little flying-squirrels crept from their nest in the rafters (of the church) and listened very intently at the sweet strains of music." In a reply to a letter of inquiry addressed to Annie Louise, her mother kindly enclosed a note relating her childhood experience thus: "In the afternoon when the teacher would have us sing before leaving (the rural school), it was not unusual to see several (flying-squirrels) come out and sit quietly on the joists until the music was over."

A few tidbits of fugitive information, acquired partly outside the research for this article, seem too interesting for omission,

especially as they intimate that only the "human animal" is sufficiently *perverted* in its taste to enjoy Jazz. Thus from Maurine Holcomb of South Dakota we have, "An incident is told of a parrot which nearly raised the roof because he disliked the Jazz which was being played." And, reverting to our little friends, the flying-squirrels, Mrs. Ohlinger of Florida says regarding a pet one, "It soon became a perfect joy—never still a minute during the evening until we placed an operatic record on the talking machine. Then, to our surprise, the squirrel sat as still as a statue, listening with every appearance of pleasure. To try its taste in music a 'jazz' record was substituted for the operatic one, and presto! the squirrel acted like a crazy thing, running away and leaping from chairs to curtains and back again, as though trying to get away from the horrible sounds."

Perhaps the languid climate of the "Sunny South" dulled the spirits of flying-squirrel and parrot to such display of humor as some clever Penguins, reported in the *Philadelphia Record* by a member of a party of intrepid English explorers: "When Shackleton was encamped in the Arctic he set out on the snow a phonograph. A great herd of Penguins was attracted by the music, and gradually got closer and closer to the instrument. But when it began playing 'Waltz Me Around, Willie, Waltz Me Around,' the entire herd turned about and waddled off, uttering sounds of contempt. Their taste was for classical music."

Obviously these letters came from youngsters telling of normal, habitual incidents. They do not report discoveries of specially interested investigators who sometimes unintentionally or unconsciously see things not as they naturally are but as the observer would like them to be. Neither are they the work of the professional writer who must disclose something which will make attractive reading. They mirror simply the impressions received by the open child-mind in its daily association with the household pets or the animals that incidentally come into its experience.

Again, the animals, themselves, were observed under unconstrained conditions of their normal life, not at a time when they were subject to special experiment. If the preponderance of "likes" be due in some degree to the natural bent of owners to discern signs of intelligence in their pets, this in no way detracts from the worth of their findings. Collectively, their testimony would seem to warrant that, in proportion to their development in intelligence, animals are not so unlike their human associates, in that some like music while others do not, the esthetic propensities varying greatly with the individual.

## SOME FALLACIES OF MODERN ANTI-WAGNERISM

By HERBERT F. PEYSER

THE proverbial rotary motion of history has carried us back to the Wagnerian question. It seems curious that there should be a Wagnerian question any more than a Bach question or a Mozart question. Thirty years ago a great many people of unassailable intelligence would have laughed the idea of such a recrudescence out of court. To them the epic struggle looked like some heroic legend of a placated and receding past. What there was of dissent seemed not much worse than the negligible protestation of choleric age or a last flare-up of spent feelings. The music of the future had become the music of the present and would, as some insisted, "continue to be the music of the future."

And yet the world has never really made its peace with Wagner. He was a problem three-quarters of a century ago and he is a problem to-day. That the aspect and purport of the problem have changed is only the corollary of enduring genius. It is the property of a masterwork to mean different things to different ages. In a sense, Wagner is no longer the simple matter he was when the Hanslicks and the Ehlerts could find no melody in the music-dramas. The anti-Wagnerism that now asks to be combated is based upon no such naïve and disingenuous opposition. It is a much more insidious affair. The present antagonists of Wagner carry on the warfare after elevating themselves by Wagner's own bootstraps to the vantage point of a kind of "higher criticism"; and the state of things becomes the more dangerous for that reason. The hostility is subtler because it is directed by shrewder minds. I do not mean to imply that it really imperils Wagner's art-work with devastating logic. But being very largely based upon sophistry and a capitalized popular ignorance or misunderstanding, it has been able to set afoot a mischievous anti-Wagnerian tradition that debauches the unwary, non-inquiring mind and puts at instant disadvantage the well-meaning but incautious Wagnerite who misguidedly construes Wagner after the letter of the bond, ignoring the spirit of his purposes and his work.

To defend Wagner against this manner of assault requires something more than that Wagnerism which takes its trusting stand on the doctrines of the Prose Works. And as there is to-day a so-styled "modern anti-Wagnerism," so is there indisputable need of an equally modern Wagnerism which shall be truly sentient, perceptive and logical; which can disencumber the subject from its rank overgrowths of Wagnerian no less than anti-Wagnerian prejudice and superstition, not by reiterating hoary platitudes or even citing the master himself, but by an eviscerating study of the music-dramas and their practical intent as well as a keen knowledge of the distinctions that exist between the eternally valid in Wagner's work and the merely temporary and didactic in his preachments—the elements which Paul Stefan calls the "zeitlich bedingten."

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If you fall to talking of Wagner and his aims and achievements even in well-tutored musical company you will be surprised at the variety and discrepancy of current notions concerning the basic facts of the question. You will remark the amount of confusion that exists as to the fundamentals of Wagner's purpose. You will learn that Wagner's "philosophy," so far as it existed, was elaborately ineffectual and that time has dealt mortally with his "theories." You will be instructed that many of his demands are unrealizable, that many of his dramatic motives are absurd, that he was recreant in his practices to the trust he invited in his teachings, that his poetry is no poetry and his theoretical hypotheses untenable. If, perchance, you try to get at the root of matters by inquiring what, after all, these maligned theories drive at, you may find yourself duly entombed under an avalanche of citations out of everything from "Opera and Drama" and "The Art-Work of the Future" to "Art and Climate" and "What Boots this Knowledge?" It is a terrible fate to invite, but it seems one of the inevitable adjuncts to Wagnerian polemics.

Probably many more years will consume themselves in bootless and vehement debate over Wagner's theories and, as probably, the misconception which seems to bedevil the whole matter will make fruitful addition to the confusion which has so long pervaded the general mind. In the meantime Wagner will be the chief sufferer. Wagner's work is basically the simplest of propositions. Yet to-day, when it is lightly taken to be understood by everybody, it continues to be misinterpreted and

obscured in the very name of its creator simply because so many people cannot see the real Wagner for gazing at the pretended one. Wagner wrote thick tomes of cumbrous prose ostensibly to prove his case. He published them and thereby launched against himself the most formidable kind of boomerang. To-day some few of us know that the best way to reach the essential Wagner is to shun the theoretical writings. In a paradox, the people who least need the Prose Works are the only ones who have earned the right to use them. These works are, in one sense at least, like Holy Writ. There is scarcely anything in them that cannot be disproved or contradicted by something else. And this is one of the reasons why the devil can cite them—like Scripture—for his purpose. Contradictions of this sort do not ultimately matter. They spring, as such things often do, from the reactions of great minds to the pressure at different times of different circumstances. In Wagner's case they also rise from an incorrigible impulse to put in writing and give currency and permanence to those random reflections and fugitive impressions, often fantastic and extravagant, that visit all of us, but which the average man only toys with and dismisses. Yet, whatever their cause or provenance, such discrepancies almost always work havoc in smaller minds that may at some time be obliged to reckon with them. People of this stripe cannot appreciate how legitimate is the royal prerogative of genius: "Do I contradict myself—very well, then, I contradict myself."

Through the mounting years the unwary have been invited to believe that treatises like "Opera and Drama," which preceded the welding of the "Nibelung's Ring," conditioned and shaped the procedures of that portentous organism. But one has only to study "Opera and Drama" and then apply its teachings to the "Ring" to discern how short that notion falls of literal truth. Some day it may dawn on the generality of critics that Wagner's prose writings maintain something of the same relationship to Wagner's lyric dramas that Beethoven's sketch-books do to his finished symphonies. The true purpose of a bulky volume like "Opera and Drama" was one of orientation and reconnoissance carried out, like every enterprise of Wagner's, on a gigantic scale. Whether or not Wagner consciously appreciated the fact, he wrote such a work more for his own enlightenment than for public instruction—or, as Ernest Newman correctly surmises, "to come to an understanding with himself." Like so much of his writing upon æsthetics, it was a sublimated laboratory experiment. But if Wagner realized this at all it was no more than subconsciously;

and what ought to have remained a secret of the workshop came to be trumpeted abroad as the gospel proper. Further, these writings fulfilled the function of a safety-valve to rid his mind of what opacities it harbored. They were a channel by which he threw off all that was dun and turgid in his intellectual system—a heroic means, in fine, of mental purgation. The regrettable part of it was that this purgation had to be performed so openly. Hans Richter probably meant more than he said when he remarked to Siegfried Wagner about the *Gesammelte Schriften*: “Ja, es ist prachtvoll was darin steht, aber eine neue Partitur wäre mir lieber.” And once in an unguarded moment at Bayreuth the composer pronounced a cutting judgment on himself that appears to have escaped the attention of most commentators. “Altogether too much is talked and written about me,” he exclaimed to Hermann Ritter, of Würzburg. “A single stroke of the bow is of more significance than all this useless gabble. I need an audience of people that know nothing at all about my art-ideals, not those who make propaganda. The types of people that suit me best are the ones who do not even know that notes are written on a five-line staff.”

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The operatic theories of Richard Wagner over which two generations have fought and quibbled amount, so far as they are of artistic and human concern, simply to this threefold proposition: (1) The subjects of lyric drama should be selected from sources that entail the smallest possible amount of commonplace and unlyrical (i.e., unemotional) matter in the dramatic texture and, consequently, in the utterances of the characters; (2) The music of such a work should be conceived in full accordance with the mood of every scene and episode; (3) The form and procedure of an opera or lyric drama should approximate as far as possible that of the spoken play, *except* when for vital reasons of psychology it should utilize essentially musical effects. To these considerations everything else is supplementary and conditional.

It should quickly be recognized that there is nothing here to reduce the modern makers of opera to a state of abject and stultifying imitation, to hinder their development of means and methods or to stand in the way of path-breaking adventures. In effect, a work may be Wagnerian in the very best and most fertile sense without disclosing one tangible point of contact with the scores or texts of anything from “Die Feen” to “Parsifal.” Viewed



in this light, few composers were ever more Wagnerian than Mozart in the most preëminent pages of "Don Giovanni" and "Le Nozze di Figaro." In this light, further, it becomes interesting to consider the case of Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande." This work has been acclaimed in its time at once a reaction from Wagner and a supreme consummation of his principles. It was denominated a perfect music-drama on the ground that its score, while enhancing the atmosphere and unremittingly interpreting the essential moods of the tragedy, remained inflexibly subsidiary and never called the attention of the hearer to itself by any parade of lyrical beauties.

But precisely in this misconception of the Wagnerian purpose lies the tragic flaw of Debussy's masterpiece. "Pelléas" and not "Tristan" is the Dead Sea fruit of Wagner's theories construed to the devastating letter. Debussy had all the required equipment for his task except the sense of psychological necessity. "Pelléas" palls in its lack of variety precisely because its composer elected to disregard (or had not the lyrical faculty to fulfill) that yearning after periodic and fundamental contrast in art which goes to the roots of human instinct and desire. In music it is the lyrical which inherits the earth, the want of it which ultimately slays. With all his reforming, Wagner was too shrewd to be caught in the folly of trying to abolish it as incompatible with his scheme. On the contrary, he enormously enlarged the conception of lyricism, and it may be questioned if this was not, after all, his greatest achievement. He presumed that the basic vice of the old-style opera lay in its habit of "making the music the end and the drama the means"; and he assured the world that the object of his labors was to reverse the process. So he did—but with the most sedulous care that his dramatic material should be selected and distributed in a way that insured as much, if not more, music *qua* music as ever had the conventional operas. In short, he arrived at the same end with a much braver show of logic. He had apparently made the drama this "end." But he so shaped its formation that the lyrical element played what amounted to quite as prevailing a rôle as before. Wagner made an eloquent gesture of tacit confession when he put his hands over the eyes of Malvida von Maysenburg at a Nibelungen rehearsal in '76 with the plea: "Don't look so much—listen." If the "end" had at last become the "means," its effect in that condition was equally good—which, after all, was the main consideration. The error has frequently been made (it is still current) of blaming Wagner for making his music so transporting as such. But is there any valid reason to believe

that this music would be more appropriate if it were less beautiful? Debussy's score in "Pelléas" unalterably subserves the poem. But even the fact of this amazing fidelity is transcended in our minds, I believe, by the abiding impression of monotony and restricted lyrical scope.

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The purpose of the foregoing remarks, however, is not intended to be vain reiteration of what has—or should have—grown ten times platitudinous. It is, rather, an apparently necessary preliminary to the survey of an article by Dr. Edgar Istel, which appeared in *THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY* of July, 1924, under the none too enigmatic title "For a Reversion to Opera." That article is a prizeable and characteristic example of the way in which the modern anti-Wagnerian works. It is the very sort of thing designed to create confusion in minds only partly enlightened and lacking initiative of understanding and perception. Dr. Istel's deserved and illustrious standing is only too well calculated to enhance the perils of such an outgiving to intellects unfortified against it. The essay is by no means brief, but it will repay careful study.

Dr. Istel approaches his task with an unfailing address and distinction of manner, but also with what look like some vigorous prejudices. Nor does he discharge it without bias or a resort to sophistries. He understands the uses of setting up one's own straw men and knocking them down with blows that make the sound of their fall reverberate through his pages. He sets out to demonstrate that the achievements of Wagner have been detrimental in practically every respect to the lyric theater. In the course of his comments he establishes to his satisfaction that Wagner tyrannically fastened upon the world a type of art-work which by its instrumental complication grievously jeopardized the ever to be desired "international vocal opera" of which "Mozart was the supreme exponent"; that Wagner's teachings and example have been at once destructive and barren; that his practice departed from his theories, while his theories at different periods contradicted each other; that his prose writings are to blame for the decline of European opera insofar as it has moved in post-Wagnerian paths; that he took leave of the old operatic work not because he had to, as a man, but only as a demigod; that he burned behind him all the bridges with the past and transplanted the political feeling into the realm of art because revolution

appealed to the actor instinct in him; that the fruit of Wagnerdom has turned out to be "hollow and rotten," and that "the old opera, long decried as moribund, has born such savory fruits of age as Verdi's last works, in which the seeds of a new blossom-time seem to lie."

Notions like these Dr. Istel develops at great length and with numerous ramifications. In certain instances he invokes Wagner's own writings to point the moral. Of course, citations of this sort mean far less than the spirit which dictates their choice and the manner of their application. There is a good deal of railing throughout the article against Wagner's theoretical pronouncements and the errors they embody, but no hesitation in resorting to them when they seem useful to some question at issue. The critic takes Wagner sharply to task, for instance, because of the declaration which he made at one time, "I shall write no more operas," and resents that "not only the form but also the name of the art-form was to be proscribed." In thus "declaring war upon form" (says Dr. Istel) Wagner "doubtless found a style suited to his genial individuality, but, for the period directly following, he condemned the art-form not merely to formlessness, but to a total lack of style, so that thereafter we can perceive the possibilities of development solely in a sensible return to the old form."

If one did not know the writer of these words for an acute contemporary critic, one might easily come away with the idea that he had never heard one of the dramas of Wagner's third period, but had derived his conception of them from a hasty and superficial perusal of "Opera and Drama." That Wagner "found a style suited to his own individuality," but "condemned the art-form to formlessness," is, to say the least, a diverting paradox. Is one thereby to understand that, in Dr. Istel's estimation, "Tristan" and "Siegfried" are "formless"? The ultimate meaning of the term "form" is coherence. Was it upon this that Wagner levied war, or upon the abuse of a convention, when he proclaimed a loosely joined tissue of isolated musical numbers to be less effective and veracious dramatically than a closely knit, organic texture? As for new possibilities of development—must the sins of the children be visited upon the father? Is Wagner to be charged with the failure of those who came after him? Does anything in Wagner's work set up a barrier against new forms and procedures that may be more effective? Is anything incompatible with the exercise of unlimited expansion, inventiveness or originality in the proposition that the music of an opera should conform

to the spirit of its text and that the construction of the thing, so far as the exigencies of lyricism permit, approach the condition of the spoken play? But for Dr. Istel the "theories" of Wagner are the hydra-headed and often antithetical statements of the Prose Works. And he breaks into at least one priceless exclamation which, had it been uttered a generation earlier, would unquestionably have blazed its way into Tappert's "Schimpf-lexikon": "Thenceforward delight in art was transmogrified into enslavement to art, voluntary theater-going into compulsory detention; broad melody was replaced by the short-breathed 'leading-motive,' and instead of a place for social enjoyment we had the Festival Playhouse. From now onward the watchword was 'You shall, you must'—no longer 'You may, you will.' It testifies equally to Wagner's enormous power of suggestion and the long-suffering indulgence of the public that the latter has for so many years been herded under the yoke of these Caudine Forks."

Oh! wicked, wicked Wagner, to take this dastardly psychical advantage of a helpless and unhappy world! Still, how strange, how passing strange that an unregenerate public should still flock to the opera-house (to say nothing of the concert-hall) to listen to these "short-breathed" leading-motives and not only endure "compulsory detention," but pay cold cash for the privilege of the misery!

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As I noted above, Wagner's theoretical treatises served their true function in providing their author a scaffolding from which he could erect his far-flung lyrical structures. They forced him to take a stand upon matters which, if not opportunely envisaged, might have embarrassed him at crucial junctures. More or less honestly he thought them a means of public enlightenment, whereas they probably augmented the sum of public stupidity. But even to intelligent minds these writings have been poison instead of meat. Anyone who takes the trouble may adduce all kinds of superfluous and gratuitous conclusions from the differences between statements that Wagner made at twenty, at forty and at sixty. Does the fact that the master, as a youth, wrote approvingly of Bellini's luxuriant vocal melody and then, at three score, composed "Götterdämmerung," indicate any reprehensible apostasy? Dr. Istel has deplored that the creator of "Tristan," who *might* have achieved a "universally human, supernational

art-work" by expressing his feelings "like Handel, Mozart, Gluck and Meyerbeer" in the "refined forms of the Romanic nations," was "obsessed of a German devil, became learned . . . and drew away from the international vocal opera." Just how "Tristan" or "Meistersinger" would have become more "universally human" or even "supernational" by utilizing the forms and formularies of the Romanic nations we are not instructed. Nor has Dr. Istel been any more specific as to the advantages of the "international vocal opera" over the "German music-drama." One is left solely to surmise that the distinguished critic cherishes the former species for the sovereign opportunities it affords to pure vocalism; and that in such opportunities lies the chief objective of opera—which is, to say the least, a debatable proposition.

Dr. Istel has made much of the fact that Wagner at one period sought to lift "Rienzi" out of the category of unmitigated opera by dividing it into scenes instead of musical numbers; and he is at a loss to understand why the composer should have deemed the trailing remnants of opera in the "Flying Dutchman" so shocking. For (I quote Dr. Istel) "did not his subconscious knowledge of the traditional opera-form save him in his later course from going so far on the wrong track in his practice as he once in a while did in his theory?"

Undoubtedly it did. And since he was on the wrong track "in his theory" rather than in practice there can be really no great need of growing heated over the fact. However, it would have been more pertinent and, indeed, more logical, to stress Wagner's artistic and psychological intuition rather than his "subconscious knowledge of opera-form" in the consummation of this salutary effect. For it was not the uses but the abuses of opera that Wagner combated. Nobody ever discerned with more keenness and penetration than he the fundamental and enduring necessity of these so-called "traditional opera-forms," their human basis, their profound and inevitable verity. It is in their failure to perceive this fact and this truth that so many commentators have missed the explanation and significance of the "operatic" features in Wagner's ripest and most characteristic works. Choral and other ensembles are by no means irreconcilable with dramatic realism under all circumstances. Indeed, there are moments in the spoken drama—most notably in the poetic drama, which is of the bone and sinew of opera—where the absence of choral and other signally musical elements actually weakens the realism of the scene. Isolde's love-death is, in essence, as incontestably an aria as "Or sai chi l'onore." But it is not a whit less true

to the spirit of the Wagnerian art-work for that reason. And, conversely, Mozart is as spiritually Wagnerian in Donna Anna's tremendous outpouring as Wagner is himself in Brünnhilde's immolation.

Yet in the face of these immutable facts we are apprized that "all his life Wagner strove against this delight in lyrical details, failing to recognize that this point is a psychological phenomenon on which the actual musical stage success depends. To be sure, only the dramatic effect of any individual piece of music ought to justify its success."

And yet only a few pages earlier Dr. Istel assures his audience that "the true relation between musical and dramatic requirements was taught by probably the greatest composer of all times—Mozart." Whereupon he advises the reader that Mozart, when he declared that poetry in opera must be the obedient daughter of music, meant that the libretto must be subordinated to musical requirements, not conversely. For in the latter case the music would certainly become the slave of the librettist and his dramatic demands. Which in turn leads him to quote approvingly Mozart's statement that "passions, whether violent or not, must never be offensively expressed, and the music even in the most repellent situation must never offend the ear, but still give pleasure."

Mozart—always Mozart! The creator of "Don Giovanni" seems to be the chief weapon in the grasp of every contemporary opponent of Wagner, though he is in many ways the least suited to the purpose, if not one of Wagner's most potent means of vindication. To Mozart, therefore, I shall presently appeal in my turn.

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Dr. Istel continues:

Wagner long succeeded in terrorizing mankind. For his writings operated far more disastrously than his works, which were fortunately not in correspondence with the master's theories. By the younger generation these writings were taken as a point of departure; they are, in fact, to blame for the decadence of European opera in so far as it has moved in post-Wagnerian paths.

Now it would be highly interesting to know how this process has worked and why blame should attach to Wagner, in any case, if what he said and did was misunderstood by the "younger generation." How much of this "younger generation" has waded



through the Prose Works, anyway? Those who wrote "Wagnerian" works and failed owe their discomfiture either to a basic lack of talent or to their own error of falling into imitations of a thing inherently inimitable. Wagner's own counsel to students and young composers was a consistent effort to discourage such imitation; and there is profound significance in his recommendation of Mozart and the old Italians to the pupils of the Naples Conservatory as the most suitable matter for their study. The reason why the surfaces of music have reflected so much of the outwardly Wagnerian is twofold: In the first place, practically every imperative genius and innovator has his multitudinous satellites; in the second, because it is just about as easy for the modern composer to escape the influence of Wagner in a final and exhaustive sense as it would be for a writer of English to escape the influence of Webster's dictionary. For what Wagner contributed to the vocabulary of music has become an inextricable part of the texture of tonal meanings. It may some day be superseded, just as the parts of speech and even whole languages grow archaic and fall from usage. But nothing has yet happened to bring about that condition. When Dr. Istel alludes to the "hollow fruit of Wagnerism" he is confounding legitimate extension and development of sound and fertile principles with a muddled aftermath. Strauss, for example, is far from being the fruit of Wagner or the heir to his spirit in the sense that Wagner was the fruit and heir of Beethoven.

The German writer's discovery of the "seeds of a new blossom-time in Verdi's last works" is not a little absorbing. Just where are the masterpieces blooming from the stem of "Otello" and "Falstaff," to uphold the accuracy of the observation? Is it not rather these operas that proffer the spectacle of what I have defined as legitimate Wagnerism operating constructively through a puissant and original genius and limited only by certain tenacious mannerisms and diminishing creative powers?

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Back to Mozart! From Hanslick and Nietzsche down to Thomas Mann it is the same old cry. The divine boy against the crafty magician, Don Juan against Wotan, Cherubino against Siegfried! What precious nonsense, what misdirected zeal! All these clamorous appeals to Mozart against Wagner reveal as little subtlety of perception, as little effort or ability to get beneath the skin of the creator of "Figaro," as the arbitrary and

highly conflicting statements about Wagner show the large wilfulness and unintelligence upon which so many modern appraisals of that master are grounded. Now Dr. Istel finds precisely in "Figaro" a proof of Mozart's "tolerant genius, that did not pursue to its ultimate conclusion that mastery of music which he demanded" and which differed so markedly from Wagner's "intolerant" genius, which had perforce "to derive the uttermost conclusions from his declared domination of the drama." The reader may be pardoned if he finds all this giddily confusing and wonders if Dr. Istel really means what he says when he says it. For just above I cited a passage in which he absolved Wagner from a measure of blame for not strictly following his "theories" in his practice. Yet here the "intolerant genius" actually does derive the "uttermost" conclusion from his theory. And again, if Mozart "taught the true relation" between music and dramatic poetry when he said in very unequivocal words that poetry must be the obedient daughter of music, why must he suddenly undergo a pat on the head for *not* pursuing this belief to its appointed end? The whole business begins to look decidedly upsetting—but then toiling through Wagner's "Gesammelte Schriften" will often unhinge a person's logic.

In selecting "Le Nozze di Figaro" as a Mozartian means of settling Wagner's conception as to the relationship that ought to exist between music and sweet poesy, Dr. Istel has been unwittingly inhospitable to his own case. For in "Figaro" is precisely that deft, dramatic and infinitely subtle concordance of play and score toward which Wagner, *mutatis mutandis*, always aspired. The estimable German commentator boldly queries if Da Ponte was a poorer librettist "for subordinating himself to Mozart's requirements." But as we study "Figaro" we are unaware of any such subordination. What does strike us is the fact that this music, of divine grace and god-like address, so surpassingly characterizes, reflects and interprets every phrase of the comedy. We have the abiding sense that the score was fashioned for the text, not the text for the score. If Mozart made Da Ponte "subservient" to his desires it was only because he was the more Wagnerian—let us call it just that—of the two. And Mozart was greatest precisely when he was most "Wagnerian." That is why "Or sai chi l'onore" is a more memorable thing than, for instance, "Martern aller Arten," or "Don Giovanni, a cenar teco" than "Non più di fiori." That, too, is why Wagner uttered the historic words: "Oh! how doubly dear and above all honor is Mozart to me in that it was not possible for him to write such music

for 'Così fan Tutte' as for 'Figaro,' or for 'Titus' as for 'Don Giovanni'!"

"Is 'Figaro' a less perfect drama because Mozart's *musical genius takes the lead in it instead of Da Ponte's drama?*" queries Dr. Istel; and forthwith he answers: "As it happens, one is not conscious of any subordination in 'Figaro'; text and music are so admirably reconciled *that one can nowhere say that one element controls the other*" (the italics are mine). Now which are we to believe—that "Mozart's music takes the lead" or that "neither element controls the other"? Or do we just pay our money and take our choice?

Almost in the same breath we have heard Wagner soundly berated for suggesting that music is the means of expression to the drama. But why cannot music be predominantly attractive and yet be a "means of expression" at the same time? Instead of limiting the capacities and offices of music by proceeding as he did, Wagner immensely extended its boundaries. Dr. Istel blandly invites us to recognize that when Wagner writes "in the opera-style" he grips us, whereas he bores us when he does not. This tendency is said to be "clearly manifest in Wagner's later works." Manifest to whom? Furthermore, the critic has not availed himself of the opportunity to enlighten his reader as to what, in his estimation, is operatic and what theoretic in a work like, for example, "Siegfried." I, for my part, should be interested to know in which portions of this drama I am supposed to sit back and experience boredom. No doubt I should be apprized that the love duet (especially the long vocal cadenza early in the scene, and again the great *stretta* at the close), to say nothing of the smithy and forging songs, is undisputed opera. I don't know but that I should cheerfully concede this point without deeming these episodes a jot less Wagnerian. But at the same time I want to know if I ought to feel tortured by the colloquy of Wotan and Erda or whether we must split on definitions and allow this scene to pass for old-style opera as well.

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Concomitantly, the leading-motive system is something of a thorn in Dr. Istel's side. He takes Wagner at his word that he has "bidden farewell to the old form of melody" after "Lohengrin" by virtue of this new system. He has made no effort, apparently, to look beyond Wagner's own assertion and to recognize that what the composer substituted for the "old form" operatic melody was the symphonic melody which, stemming from Mozart

and Beethoven, was not exactly unheard of. The thematic texture of the music-dramas of Wagner is purely an extension and development of such "old form" symphonic melody as courses through the nine symphonies. People have wasted no end of time and lung-power on the fact that most of the leading-motives of the "Ring" and "Tristan" are short. As well despise Beethoven's fifth symphony because its first movement is practically made out of a theme four notes in length, or deride an oak for the size of its ancestral acorn. Dr. Istel, moreover, is not the first and will assuredly not be the last to lament that the symphonic principle in opera means that "instead of the singers' absorbing the orchestra, the instruments at last drown the voice." One might inquire at this juncture what objection anyone has to the orchestra that he should wish the singers to "absorb" it. I shall not press that point. It is rather this everlasting cry against the "loudness" of Wagner's orchestra that so sorely tries the patience. Nobody will dispute that post-Wagnerian composers have misused their orchestral gifts. The process has grown out of a misunderstanding of Wagner's method, or indifference to it. For anyone who has not been to Bayreuth, an exhaustive inspection of the music-dramas, score in hand, should suffice to convince the most biased that Wagner applied his orchestral dynamics with such calculation and care that the weightiest climaxes strike at moments when the singing voice is silent, or else recede and diminish before the voice completes the essential syllable or word. Dynamic excess in Wagner indicates either carelessness or inefficiency in the conductor, faulty acoustics or improper placement of the orchestra. The structural arrangements of the average opera-house are inhospitable to a discreet use of the modern orchestra, anyway. The remedy is the sunken pit or a stroke of luck in the matter of acoustics, both of which Wagner's scheme presupposed. We have, therefore, to blame circumstances alien to the composer's purpose when the orchestra of "Tristan" or the "Ring" grows obstreperous. To chide Wagner for this is about as sensible as to reprove him for making certain difficult scenic demands that some promptly pronounce impossible just because stage machinery in its development has not yet caught up with them.

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"That Wagner's principles must lead astray into paths ending in a new 'lunatic asylum,' was recognized betimes by some few keen and clever thinkers."

Never mind who these "thinkers" were, or who they are. With all their "keenness" and "cleverness" they seem never to have been acute enough to dig to the bed-rock of these principles and discover for themselves how lucid and simple they were or how much beneficent latitude they granted each and every dramatic composer to develop and produce according to the dictates of his own individuality. Wagnerism, in the light of popular fallacy, connotes imitation. True Wagnerism, interpreted in the aim and spirit of Wagner, presumes nothing of the kind. Those whom it leads along paths "ending in a lunatic asylum" are the very ones that misconceive and misrepresent it as egregiously as certain of our leading modern anti-Wagnerians.

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A young composer once remarked wearily to Gustav Mahler that "Wagner had nothing more to say to him."

"What a pity!" retorted Mahler; "at any rate it isn't Wagner's fault!"

## "JAZZ"—AN EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

By EDWIN J. STRINGHAM

IT may seem a bit strange that Jazz should receive serious attention from musical educators; but the truth is, if one will be fair, that there are two sides to the Jazz question. Unquestionably, there is much bad in some of it; but there is also some good in the better type of this popular form of musical expression. As we know jazz to-day, it is like most anything else in life; the vice or virtue in a thing is largely dependent upon the use to which it is put, or the degree of indulgence. A thing may be ever so good under certain conditions; but if it be used to excess, the effects will very likely be bad. Conversely, poison, in proper doses, may be used as a helpful agent toward health. Almost any child (and adult for that matter) likes sweetmeats, and a reasonable amount of it at the proper time is helpful: too much of it at any time, or some of it at the wrong time, may cause ill effects.

So it is with jazz. This form of music, as we shall call it for the time being, at least for sake of argument, has been denounced far and wide as being of immoral character and having within it the means of inducing immorality. Nothing is so absurd. Music itself, as we know, has no inherent moral basis; it is a matter of use and association. Take a hymn tune, for instance. There is nothing in the notes themselves that stamps the music sacred. Rather, it is the association with the words of the hymn and the inseparable wedding of both the music and the words to a definite use, that impart the sacredness to the hymn tune.

It would be decidedly immoral to use such a tune as "Nearer, My God, to Thee" for any other purpose than its time-honored association. It has been used for so many years for sacred purposes that nothing else save worship can be thought of in connection with either the words or the music, or both. Conversely, it would be an act of irreverence to use a tune like, "Oh, Gee, be sweet to me, kid," in any part of a religious service. However, be it acknowledged that some hymns have been made from music that was composed originally for instrumental use or vocal works of a secular nature. Granted; but the music was good in the



first place and had not suffered any disgrace in its use before being turned to service as a hymn tune. So we see how association plays a large part in determining the moral character of music, and it cannot be proved that jazz, *per se*, is immoral. It may be put to immoral use; but that is aside from the inherent capabilities of the mere musical notes.

It is well that we have some understanding of what is meant by jazz. No doubt, we would have as many definitions as we would have definers; but to me, jazz means the utilization of a strongly marked rhythm of unusual nature (syncopated, complex, compound, irregular, oddly divided or accentuated), which may or may not be interwoven with two or more rather free contrapuntal parts; the purpose of the entire piece being *divertissement* or dancing. As yet, jazz has no serious nature. One does not have to read between these lines to see that it is difficult to define jazz; but since it is customary to define a thing one is discussing, the writer's view, weak as it is, is presented at this time.

Naturally, there is both good and bad jazz—that is, good or bad from a compositional standpoint, but in this article I have in mind only the better type of jazz; that which is composed by understanding musicians, that which is well conceived and written according to ordinary esthetical and technical standards, and that which is really clever in either composition or orchestration. The other kinds of jazz need not bother us at this time; for the bad types of jazz are self-evident and carry within themselves their own swiftest and surest condemnation.

Certain types of professional musicians have seen fit to rail at jazz, to denounce it to the high heavens and to demand that it be wiped off the face of the earth. They seem to derive a great deal of enjoyment from getting such words of condemnation "off their chest," as the man in the street would say. They do not take the time to see if any good can be discovered, and they are insulted when it is intimated that there might be a little cleverness here, a good bit of harmonic, melodic or rhythmic writing there and elsewhere. Nothing but a burst of indignation and display of wounded esthetic sense results whenever the subject of jazz is brought before them from out the closet of opinions. Yet, I dare say, every person who loves music has some kind feeling toward jazz and even likes quite a bit of it—and would say so if he were really honest with himself and his friends. I often feel that many of those who denounce jazz so vehemently are inclined to be a bit guilty of "posing," even though they do not realize it. It is their pride to be known as "one who dwells in the world of

better music," or "one whose musical tastes are unquestionable," or the like, and it does hurt their ego to be jostled by such a contemptible thing as jazz—it is far beneath their notice and never to be thought of in their presence. That may be hitting it a bit hard; but some of us take ourselves so seriously, too seriously, too much of the time. We need a little esthetical relaxation now and then.

No form of music can do this as effectively as jazz. Jazz is the laughter, the fun, the "sans souci" of the tone-world. It is the ironer of wrinkles that kink our esthetic senses now and then. It is an antidote for too much "beefsteak," as I have heard "classical" music called by a musical "low-brow." Gastronomically speaking, the music of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms may possibly be likened unto beefsteak; but a menu cannot be constructed out of such all the time. We need something to make us grin and laugh once in a while. Jazz certainly can do that much better than music of the finer qualities, and who is there among us that does not crave for musical relaxation now and then? Jazz is the joke-smith in the world of tones, and who would deny us mortals a joke now and then? The musical jokes of the "classical" lore are usually as funny as a hospital. Jazz has no pretensions of being anything other than light and disposed toward levity; at least it has had no other ambitions until recently. But what of future possibilities?

What we need on the part of serious musicians, is not wholesale denunciation, but succor. Jazz is in need of guidance into true, wholesome channels wherein it may be developed into what we would like to have it. Jazz is here; it is an actuality and cannot be obliterated. It can be developed, and therefore it might be needlessly harmful to obliterate it, if we were able. Jazz is the only music many persons know. It is a source of enjoyment to them and it would be impossible for any other type of music to take its place immediately. We may do it gradually; but that is wholly another question. Jazz is both indicative and resultant of the present day social conditions in these United States. In a way, it serves an immediate purpose of being a more or less artificial type of American folk-music, in as much as it is widespread in adoption and expresses the general, or popular, sentiment of the people of our country to-day—however much we would wish it otherwise. The writer does not consider it beyond possibility, or probability, that some of the popular music of to-day will be regarded in the light of folk-music sometime in the future. The time for the birth of real, serious and legitimate American folk-

song is past and whatever is done in the future in that direction must be, as in the past, a more or less artificial type of folk-lore, as we have already observed in the songs of Foster and the like.

There are many good things to be noticed in the musical composition of Jazz. Many of the orchestral arrangements are very clever indeed. Some of the effects of instrumentation are worthy of composers of serious purposes and ideals. The use of the instruments in some of the better Jazz arrangements is often highly original and effective. The arrangers have so developed their art that they are able to write works which are so interesting for the individual instruments and in ensemble that they bear close analysis on the part of the more sedate and serious composers. This has come about through the employment of arrangers who have been "born and raised" upon the musical food of much sterner stuff. The writer personally knows of arrangers who have acquitted themselves creditably in the composition of orchestral music of the serious and larger orchestral forms before going into the field of jazz. No doubt the enticement of monetary ends has led them there; but the fact remains that some of the leading jazz publishers have upon their staffs men who can write and have written excellent music of serious mien—one need but point to the case of Victor Herbert. Nor is his an isolated case, since there are many others if we but care to discover them behind the screen of anonymity.

The world of classical music has furnished much inspiration to composers and arrangers of jazz; sometimes to the betterment of jazz and sometimes to the detriment of the classics. Be that as it may, debate on that subject is really futile. Also, it is beside the question. As a matter of fact, the jazz purveyors have taken tunes from our classical music, but they have put them in such a palatable form that a greater number of persons can enjoy them than would be possible for them with the tunes in their original form.

Furthermore, in many cases, persons who once knew and appreciated nothing higher than jazz were led onward toward the appreciation of the so-called "Better music" by being introduced to the tunes of the classical scores by means of the jazz pieces. The writer has for a long time indulged in a personal investigation along this line and has discovered that the foregoing is a statement of undeniable fact. True, there is a noticeable gap between the jazz and the classics, but this gap must be bridged from below and not from above. One of the writer's "cases" out of many, will illustrate this point.

Mr. J. purchased a phonograph and a player-piano. His first stock of records and rolls were of the music he then liked and understood—jazz. Little by little he added some of the better types of popular music, then some rolls and records of the lighter salon music. It was not long ere Mr. J. was buying only the better music, symphonic, string quartet, and operatic records by the dozen and recorded piano compositions by the three B's and the like. Now Mr. J. can discuss a dozen operas, not a few symphonic works and a host of piano works from the classics. To hear him talk, one would think he has had a stiff Conservatory training; he has had, but in a different form. Now Mr. J. appreciates and understands music as do few other laymen and better than many a professional musician. This analysis would be open to question as to cause and effect were it not for the personal knowledge the writer has had of this "case" and of the rôle jazz played in bringing about the transformation.

Among other things, jazz arrangers and composers have drawn upon the well-spring of the classical composers for harmonic invention. A few years ago, Jazz tunes consisted very largely of tonic, dominant and subdominant chords, some rightly and some wrongly used, and a dash of a "barber-shop" chord now and then. Modulations were of the most elementary kind, if any were used at all, and harmonic figuration was limited to a few primitive designs. To-day we find it no uncommon thing to hear a succession of chords in a jazz piece that would do honor to any serious composer; accompaniment figuration is often ingenious, and modulations have gone the way of modulations in general. As for secondary seventh chords of the dominant family (sevenths, ninths, elevenths and thirteenth), the jazz of to-day is rich in them all and, we dare say, they are used with as much effectiveness as similar chords in serious works. A broad statement; but the reader can see, or hear, for himself if he will but take the trouble and throw away his mask of prejudice for a short time.

Rhythms are being used in jazz works that would make a "serious" composer sit up and burn the midnight oil so that he might invent something near the variations of accent the jazz writers are using all the time and using well for their purpose. Stravinsky himself has redoubtable rivals in this direction in some of the jazz writers. Of course, they overwork their ideas and the jazz writers defeat their own purposes through monotony; but that is another story. One wonders how they are able to conjure up so many variations of accent placing, time divisions and combinations of rhythms as they do. It is one of the marvels

of jazz. It would seem as though the end of rhythmic invention had come; but, no, a new figure is born overnight. Yet almost all these inventions have taken place in duple rhythm. The triple rhythm has, so far, been but lightly touched. A new world awaits the jazzist in this direction; also in the line of simultaneous use of different rhythmic schemes. Only the small complement of instruments composing the average jazz orchestra precludes much invention in the use of this idea in the jazz of to-day. But to-morrow?

Jazz writers have also drawn upon classical music for the formal structure of jazz. A few years ago, jazz pieces were largely of the ballad type. Nowadays, the better arrangers go so far as to use the "Sonata-Allegro" scheme as the skeleton of their work, and now and then we hear them utilize even the characteristic devices of the concerto, the symphony and the opera. Indeed, some day in the near future we may enjoy an entire jazz Concerto, jazz Symphony or jazz Opera. That experience only awaits the jazz writer who has had sufficient training in the serious forms—or poverty stricken classical composers who discover that they can live with more ease and luxury by being "versatile." Though this last prediction is written with the writer's tongue in cheek, it contains nevertheless the proverbial grain of truth.

I share the view that jazz is the most distinctive contribution America has made to the world-literature of music. What we now need is proper guidance of the jazz germ. There are two kinds of germs in the physical world—those that kill and those that preserve human life. Jazz germs are of the same nature. It is for the open-minded American musicians and musical educators to discover, preserve and develop the worthy elements of jazz. Jazz as an end in itself, except for dancing and the like, is to be deplored. Jazz as an idiom for something worthwhile, as a stepping-stone to something better than we now recognize, is, as Shakespeare put it, "a consummation devoutly to be wished."

## A SURVEY OF RUSSIAN SONG

By E. H. C. OLIPHANT

**T**HERE are four peoples who have contributed greatly and notably to that form of music which is known as "the art-song" (a hideous term; but I know no other by which to distinguish music for a single voice and piano alone from other classes of music, and at the same time to differentiate between the song that belongs to the arts and the song that belongs to trade). Of these four, the Russian is not the greatest or the most artistic, but it is the most distinctive and the most varied. It is distinctive because it has in a very large degree the qualities of the Russian people, and because the Russians are farther apart from other European peoples than these are from one another. The character of a people shows itself as markedly perhaps in the nature of its folk-music as in anything; and there is no other European music of high standing that is more clearly founded on national folk-music than is the Russian, and no other European folk-music, save perhaps the Spanish, that is more individual.

The songs of the great German composers are no less national, no less perfectly reflect the German character and aspirations—in fact, they are even more national, even more representative. There is in them—if I may say so—more "Germanity" and less humanity. I must not be misunderstood: I am not wishing to accuse the German people of a lack of the elements of a common humanity; what I wish to point out is that, while German music is true to the German national type, it does not set itself out to be true to the individual, as does Russian music—at any rate, in the hands of its greatest master. Nor has the music of the German-speaking peoples, great as it is, the variety and the originality that we are justified in demanding from the long line of illustrious men who constitute its glory. Each of its mighty masters has been content to build on others: not one of them has displayed the tremendous individuality and originality of a Musorgsky.

The music of the best French composers is much less national than that of their German rivals. It is only of recent years that they have achieved great distinction in song, but they have atoned for their delay by an achievement that none of the other nations



can match; but though it is essentially Gallic in many of its qualities, it is in but a slight degree infused with the spirit of the French folk-song. It is cosmopolitan, in the best sense of the word; and, when it has not been, its distinction has not been great. The achievement of the English-speaking peoples in this field is far below that of either French or German; but it is coming on. Some of it—some of the best of it—is distinctively English; but a very large proportion has been made up of alien elements. That reproach cannot, however, truthfully be levelled against the best English song of the day; and there are already the makings of a national school.

From all these the Russian composers stand apart. A few have been Russian only in name, Russian by reason of nationality, but German or French or Italian in sympathy and in workmanship; but the majority are distinctly Russian, employing the national rhythms, the national melodic types. If they were mere copyists of the folk-music of their country, there would be little to be said in their favor; but to so describe them would be unjust. Rather it is to be said that they have imbibed the spirit of that music till their speech is according to the idiom. He who studies the admirable collection of folk-songs edited by Kurt Schindler in three volumes ("Sixty Russian Folk-Songs for one voice") will find there the foundation of many of the masterpieces of song here dealt with. And of the mightiest of all the makers of these songs—a song-composer so great that the whole world offers only one man worthy of being set in a grade above him—it is to be said that no composer who ever lived made more use of the folk-music of his country than did he.

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The following is the list of songs on which this article is based. The number in brackets succeeding the name of the composer gives the total number of his songs available to me for study. The number in brackets after the title or opus-number of a set shows the total of songs in that set, or, where incomplete, the number examined.

*Anon.* (1) : The coquette.

*Alabev* (1) : The nightingale.

*Alferaki* (4) : Nos. 1 and 5 of Op. 16, 1 of 21, and 3 of 26.

*Arensky* (21) : Op. 10 (6); Little fish's song (Op. 27, No. 1); Hour of dreams (Op. 38, No. 3); The eagle (Op. 44, No. 1); Deep hidden (Op. 44, No. 6); Children's songs, Op. 59 (6); Reverie (Op. 60, No. 3); Berceuse (Op. 70, No. 3); But lately in dance; Wolves; Spirit of poesy.

- Bach, C. von* (1) : *Enfant, si j'étais roi.*  
*Bagrinsky* (1) : *All the bells.*  
*Bakhtmetiev* (2) : *Cossack's lullaby; Iamshik's complaint.*  
*Balakirev* (31) : *Melodies published by Gutheil* (20); *Melodies published by Jurgenson* (10); *Invocation.*  
*Bezborodko* (1) : *Thou art not here.*  
*Bleichmann* (2) : *No. 4 of Op. 8; No. 2 of Op. 26.*  
*Borodin* (12) : *Melodies* (4); *Songs* (4); *Second set of Songs* (4).  
*Bulakhov* (1) : *Sie ist nicht mehr.*  
*Catoire* (6) : *Op. 22* (6).  
*Chaikovsky* (68) : *Op. 6* (6); *Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5 of Op. 16* (4); *Op. 25* (6); *Op. 27* (6); *Nos. 1 and 3-6 of Op. 28* (5); *No. 1 of Op. 37*; *Nos. 1-4 and 6 of Op. 38* (5); *Nos. 2-7 of Op. 47* (6); *Nos. 4, 5, 8-10, 16 of Op. 54* (6); *Nos. 2, 5 and 6 of Op. 57* (3); *Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 12 of Op. 60* (6); *Op. 63* (6); *Op. 65* (6); *No. 6 of Op. 73*; *War that feeds on pretty lovers.*  
*Cherepnin* (7) : *Op. 1, No. 2*; *Op. 7, No. 6*; *Op. 8, No. 3*; *Op. 21, Nos. 3 and 4* (2); *Op. 26, No. 2*; *To music.*  
*Cui* (19) : *Op. 37* (3); *Op. 54* (5); *Nos. 22 and 25 of Op. 57* (2); *Op. 62, No. 11*; *Ah, if Mother Volga (from Op. 67)*; *The earth lay softly sleeping*; *Enfant, si j'étais roi*; *La bataille*; *Les trois oiseaux*; *Solitude*; *Hunger song*; *Dusk fallen.*  
*Dargomizsky* (9) : *Dearest little maiden*; *Silent sorrow*; *Only love*; *Knight errant*; *Eastern song*; *Heavenly clouds*; *Forsaken*; *O thou rose-maiden*; *Ye dear fleeting hours.*  
*Davidov* (1) : *Questionings.*  
*Derfeldt* (1) : *Friendship.*  
*Dúbúk* (2) : *They tell me*; *Winter.*  
*Glazunov* (8) : *Op. 27* (2); *Op. 60, No. 3*; *Collection of songs published by Bessel* (5).  
*Glière* (2) : *Ah, twine no blossoms (Op. 18, No. 7)*; *Die heil'gen drei Könige.*  
*Glinka* (7) : *North star*; *The skylark*; *The journey*; *How sweet it is*; *Vigil*; *Midnight review*; *Romance, No. 7.*  
*Gnesin* (1) : *Rosen.*  
*Grechaninov* (27) : *Op. 1, Nos. 2, 4 and 5* (3); *Op. 5* (4); *Op. 20, Nos. 2 and 4* (2); *Snowflakes, Op. 47* (10); *Les fleurs du mal, Op. 48* (5); *Slumber reigns*; *Another little hour I begged*; *The siren.*  
*Grünbaum* (1) : *Cossack's song.*  
*Ippolitov-Ivanov* (3) : *Op. 15, No. 3*; *Op. 23, No. 3*; *Op. 44, No. 5.*  
*Jacobson* (1) : *Op. 2, No. 3.*  
*Kalinnikov* (2) : *Stars ethereal*; *A prayer.*  
*Katz* (1) : *Song of Kalistrat.*  
*Klem* (1) : *Autumn winds.*  
*Koenenman* (3) : *Op. 7, Nos. 5 and 6* (2); *The blacksmith.*  
*Kopilov* (1) : *The laborer's complaint.*  
*Koreshchenko* (3) : *Autumn melody (Op. 26, No. 1)*; *Marine (My pretty fisher maiden)*; *The smith.*  
*Kochubei* (1) : *O tell my love.*  
*Liadov* (16) : *Op. 1* (4); *Op. 14 and 18 (Children's songs, 12).*  
*Liapunov* (6) : *Op. 14, No. 3*; *Op. 30* (4); *Op. 51, No. 1.*  
*Leov* (1) : *Gipsy's song.*

- Markevich* (1) : O pray.  
*Medtner* (31) : Op. 6, Nos. 2, 7 and 8 (3); Op. 12 (3); Op. 13, No. 2; Op. 18 (6); Op. 19 (3); Op. 24 (8); Op. 29 (7).  
*Miaskovsky* (6) : Skizzen (3); Aus S. Gippius Stücke (3).  
*Musorgsky* (55) : Melodies (38); In the nursery (7); Sunless (6); Songs and dances of death (4).  
*Naprávnik* (1) : Cossack cradle-song.  
*Nicolaev* (1) : Dawn of night.  
*Ornstein* (2) : Oriental songs (2).  
*Prokofiev* (6) : The ugly duckling (Op. 18); Op. 36 (5).  
*Rakhmaninov* (21) : Op. 4, Nos. 1-5 (5); Op. 8, Nos. 2 and 4 (2); Op. 14, Nos. 2, 9 and 11 (3); Op. 21, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 12 (6); Op. 26, Nos. 2, 6, 7, 10 and 12 (5).  
*Rimsky-Korsakov* (39) : Op. 2, Nos. 2 and 3 (2); Op. 3 (4); Op. 4 (4); Op. 7, Nos. 2 and 4 (2); Op. 8, No. 2; Op. 25 (2); Op. 26, No. 4; Op. 39 (4); Op. 40 (4); Op. 41 (4); Op. 42, No. 2; Op. 45, No. 3; Op. 46, Nos. 1, 4 and 5 (3); Op. 50, Nos. 1, 2 and 5 (3); Op. 56 (2); Come to the realm of roses.  
*Rubinstein* (72) : Op. 8 (6); Op. 27, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9 (7); Op. 32 (6); Op. 33 (6); Op. 34 (12); Op. 36, Nos. 1, 3, 7-12 (8); Op. 57, Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 6 (4); Op. 72, Nos. 1-4, 6 (5); Op. 76, Nos. 1-3, 5 (4); Op. 78, No. 1; Op. 83, Nos. 8-10 (3); Op. 91, No. 2; Klinge, klinge, mein Pandero; Der Engel; Der Gefangene; Neugriechisches Lied; Die Wanderschwalbe; Es singt der Ros'; Frühlingsblick; Veilchen vom Berg; Ich hatte eine Nachtigall.  
*Sakhnovsky* (2) : Spring (Op. 4, No. 2); The clock.  
*Saminsky* (7) : Op. 2, Nos. 1, 2 and 4 (3); Op. 12, Nos. 1 and 2 (2); Op. 18, Nos. 1 and 2 (2).  
*Shaikevich* (1) : Cradle-song.  
*Slonov* (1) : Op. 10, No. 1.  
*Sokolov* (2) : Op. 10, No. 1; Through the fields in winter.  
*Spendiárov* (1) : Tatar song.  
*Stravinsky* (27) : Op. 6 (2); Op. 9 (2); Poésies de Balmont (2); Poésies de la lyrique Japonaise (3); Recollections of childhood (3); Pribaoutki (4); Berceuses du chat (4); Histoires pour enfants (3); Chants russes (4).  
*Tanéev* (6) : Op. 26, Nos. 1 and 9 (2); Op. 32 (4).  
*Tarnovsky* (1) : Had I a thousand eyes.  
*Tiniakov* (1) : At twilight (Op. 5, No. 2).  
*Titov* (1) : Talisman.  
*Varlamov* (10) : Wanderer's night-song; Expectancy; The red sarafan; Ah, tell me why; Tears; At the window; Protestations; Peace; Parting's sorrow; Stay, oh, stay.  
*Vasilenko* (11) : Op. 2, No. 2; Op. 11, No. 1; Op. 13, Nos. 1 and 2 (2); Op. 23, Nos. 1 and 4 (2); Op. 16, Incantations (5).  
*Víol* (13) : Op. 5 (3); Op. 7 (6); Op. 11 (3); Op. 31, No. 4 (Meine Laute).  
*Zolotarev* (1) : Canzonetta (Op. 12, No. 4).

This makes a total of 596 songs; but I have also had before me a number of operatic arias, dramatic scenes, chorus songs, and

vocalises. These, however, I have regarded as outside the scope of my inquiry. Many of the songs dealt with have been sent me for the purpose by the firms of Oliver Ditson, of Boston, Schirmer, of New York, and Carl Fischer, of New York, the Composers' Music Corporation, of the same city, the house of Chester, of London, and the Russian Music Agency, of Percy St., London (to which I am indebted for the publications of Belaieff, of Bessel, of Jurgenson, of Gutheil, and of the Russischer Musik-Verlag). In every case throughout this article where I have occasion to refer to a song, I shall indicate the source from which it came, even though I may already have been in possession of it. For this purpose, the volume "A Century of Russian Song from Glinka to Rachmaninoff, collected and edited by Kurt Schindler" (Vol. 16 of "The Golden Treasury of Music"), published by Schirmer, is represented as "SC"; the two volumes of "Masters of Russian Song, collected and edited by Kurt Schindler," also published by Schirmer, as "SM"; the two volumes of "Modern Russian Songs, edited by Ernest Newman" (forming part of "The Musicians' Library"), published by the Oliver Ditson Company, as "D"; the publications of the Composers' Music Corporation, as "C"; those of Carl Fischer, as "F"; those of J. and W. Chester, Limited, as "Ch"; those of A. Gutheil, as "G"; those of P. Jurgenson, as "J"; those of the Russischer Musik-Verlag, as "R"; those of W. Bessel & Co., as "WB"; and those of M. P. Belaieff, as "MB." Where no source is mentioned, the songs have come solely from my own collection.

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An initial difficulty for the student of Russian song who does not happen to be a Russian or acquainted with the Russian language is afforded by the text. Here and now I confess to this deficiency; but at least I have this consolation, that it is a defect which will be shared by probably 95 per cent. of my readers. If I were writing for a Russian magazine, it would be indeed a serious handicap; but it matters little in the case of readers who, whether they study or sing or only listen to these songs, have to do so in translations. If I were able to point out prosodic faults in the setting of the Russian poems, and had occasion to do so, that would not advantage the ordinary reader: it would not benefit him to know that there were instances of false accentuation, that pauses were introduced in the wrong places, that the composers lacked a complete knowledge of the principles of Russian verse, and that

they had failed to show the respect for the words of the poems that every poet has the right to expect from the composer who dares to attempt to give his ideas musical expression. Still, the inability to do this is a drawback, because it prevents that full and perfect appreciation of the work of the composer which is dependent upon a knowledge of the meaning of the poem he is setting and the degree to which he has caught the rhythm of the verse. From translations nothing is to be learnt as to the versification of the original poems; too often one is left wondering, not merely what is the verse-structure but even what is the meaning of the words. Let me, for example, quote two translations of the words of Chaïkovsky's Op. 57, No. 5, styled in the Chaïkovsky volume in Boosey's Imperial Edition "Consolation," and, in the volume allotted to the songs of the same composer in Ditson's Musicians' Library, "Death." In the former, the translation, by Fred. J. Whishaw, is as follows:

Nay, weep not, love, so bitterly  
 See, we part to meet again!  
 And the hours we pass in solitude  
 Are but love's alloy of pain!  
 Then smile, love, again.  
 As surely as the dawn will come after night,  
 To tip the clouds with light  
 And wake the bees to toil again,  
 And the birds to sing with might and main.  
 So, when these sad hours are passed away,  
 And grief has had her little day,  
 We shall meet, dear love, whom I adore,  
 We shall meet to part no more,  
 To part, my love, to part no more.

Chaïkovsky may not have had the very finest taste in his selection of words; but one cannot fancy him or any composer of even tenth-rate capacity choosing words of which these are any adequate rendering. But I am not quoting these lines for their badness. Bad translations are so common that it would be easy to find even worse—even very much worse. One does not—at least, one need not—expect a Rossetti or a FitzGerald, a Shelley or a Frere, a George Chapman or a Gilbert Murray among those who are glad to earn the small fees paid to the translator of songs for music; but one has a right to ask for a correct version of the meaning of any poem treated and for an adherence to the poet's metre. If I have quoted Mr. Whishaw's rendering, it is because of the doubts raised in my mind on these points by a consideration of the work of Isidora Martinez in the Ditson volume. Here is her

version, which may have been taken direct from the Russian, but more probably has been derived from a German translation:—

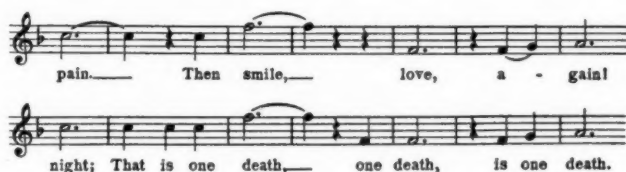
Strews the rose her sweetly-scented leaves afar;  
 Sinks the star to rest from heaven's height;  
 Breaks the ocean wave upon the rocky shore;  
 Dies the sunset glow into the night;  
 That is one death, one death, is one death;  
 But also void of every pang is one death,  
 A transformation blest,  
 Holy peace to those departed bringing—  
 Nature's gift, the fairest and the best.  
 Learn from her, the teacher ever faithful,  
 Your fate aright to comprehend,  
 That ye, smiling, and resignedly,  
 That ye, smiling, and resignedly,  
 May look forward calmly to the end.

What it all means I cannot say; but at least this adheres fairly closely to the German version of Hans Schmidt. The question that arises is then, is it Mr. Wishaw or is it Herr Schmidt who has departed so entirely from the sense of the original—assuming, of course, that it had any sense. One of them has certainly done so, and it may be that both have ignored the meaning of the words they have been set to translate. Mr. Wishaw's version is to be preferred, because it does at least mean something; but it may be that, because he could make no sense of the original, he launched out into a species of originality of his own. However that may be, the fact remains that we are left in utter doubt as to the character and meaning of the poem that Chaïkovsky set, and can accordingly judge of it only with very serious reservations.

Nor is that all the trouble. Let us suppose that one of the two translators does really serve us as an interpreter of the words of the poet, what is still painfully evident is that one or other of them has entirely ignored the form of the verse. (I say "one or other"; but I think it would be tolerably safe to assume that the fault of one is the fault of both.) Some sense of poetic values is required even in a translator. One can no more have the language of a poet rendered into verse in another language by one ignorant of the principles of verse-making than one can have the language of a cultured Russian gentleman adequately interpreted for us by a greasy barbarian from the Bowery. I am not alluding to the lack of poetic quality, but to the lack of form. Of the quality of the poem in the original we can have no conception; and as to its meaning we are in no better position; but, besides these grave drawbacks, we are left in entire ignorance of the poem's



form. That of Mr. Whishaw's rendering differs entirely from that of Herr Schmidt. They cannot both be true; and the question obtrudes itself, Is either? Apparently the composer indulged in some duplication; but it may be noted that according to the one version it was with the last line of the poem that he took this liberty, and that according to the other it was the penultimate line that he repeated. But that is not the worst. Compare the fifth line in the one version with the same line in the other. Here they are:



One of the two must be a shocking perversion of the poem and of Chaïkovsky's interpretation of it. The rhythm is ruined, the verse being treated on the accordeon principle, as something to be distended or contracted at will. To treat verse so is not translation, but desecration. If the Whishaw version be correct, then the other does the composer a grave injustice in making him responsible for a senseless repetition of words that can hardly belong to the poem he was setting. If he was really guilty of such a flagrant profanation of the poet's work, one must suppose that Mr. Whishaw was moved by a pardonable, if not altogether justifiable desire to rid the song of a glaring fault. And so we return to my original grievance, that we do not know and cannot say.

There are critics who will urge that such knowledge of the poem set is not necessary, that the music is to be judged solely as music. It would be as reasonable to say that an opera can be enjoyed at full without any knowledge of what it is about. A song is not necessarily a good song because it is musically beautiful: it must also be true to the poet's conception, must convey his meaning, must conform to his metre. In the case of songs in languages unknown, we can judge of the composer's achievement only if the translation is an adequate one. As I have said, we can scarcely hope to get the beauty of the original; but strict adherence to the spirit, an accurate rendering of the words, and a close copy of the form are all necessary before criticism can in such cases feel itself upon solid ground.

It may be thought that one has a much better chance of a true appreciation of the work of Russian composers by their settings of French and German songs; but, though this is true in some cases, it is far from being so in all. Now and then we come upon a song from a foreign source that has been set, not to the original words, but to a Russian translation which has departed from the original metre. An example is Rakhmaninov's setting of Heine's best-known and most-set lyric. Instead of going direct to Heine, the composer set to work on a Russian rendering by Pleshcheev, which, varying the metre, should be regarded less as a translation than as an original poem based on borrowed ideas. Consequently, when a German equivalent for these words is required, the poem has to be retranslated into the language, because the original words cannot be made to fit. Hence the very first line has to be varied from

Du bist wie eine Blume

to

Du bist wie eine taufrische Blume.

It is obvious that in such a case we are not much better off than in the setting of purely Russian verses.

As the student of Russian song is bothered with widely-differing translations of the words, so he is apt to be troubled with varying titles. If, seeing a song of Chaïkovsky's praised under the name of "Benediction," he ordered a copy, he would be annoyed to find it to be one he already possessed under the title of "Pilgrim's Song"; and, if, further, acting on the advice of an esteemed friend, he gave an order for another Chaïkovsky, entitled "In the Forest," it would greatly increase his vexation to find himself in possession of yet a third copy of the same song. Some of this giving of titles seems to be quite reckless and unnecessary. Why, for example, in the Boosey volume of Chaïkovsky's songs to which I have already made reference, should the well-known "Warum sind dann die Rosen so blass?" be given the name "Ichabod"? This serves no good purpose and is apt to cause much avoidable trouble.

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The composers with whom I have to deal may be taken in four periods. The first (to which I guess the anonymous song to belong) contains the names of Lvov, Varlamov, Alabev, Bakhmetev, Bulakhov, Glinka, Titov, Bezborodko, Derfeldt, Dúbúk,

Kochubei, Markevich, Klem, Grünbaum, Shaikevich and Dargomijsky. These were all born prior to 1830. The men of the next 20 years are Rubinstein, Borodin, Cui, Balakirev, Davidov, Musorgsky, Napravnik (who was really a Czech, but is generally claimed as a Russian), Chaikovsky, Alferaky, Von Bach, Tarnovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. In the third period I class the men born during the twenty years immediately preceding 1870—Tanéev, Kopylov, Liadov, Liapunov, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Sokolov, Arensky, Catoire, Vitol, Grechaninov, Spendiarov, Glazunov, Kalinnikov, Bleichmann, Slonov, Bagrinovsky, Jacobson and Nicolaev (though I am not certain that the last-named three belong to this section). Finally we have the later men—Katz, Sakhnovsky, Tiniakov (perhaps misplaced here), Koreshchenko, Vasilenko, Rakhmaninov, Cherepnin, Zolotarev, Koeneman, Glière, Medtner, Miaskovsky, Stravinsky, Gnesin, Saminsky, Prokofev, Ornstein.

A word may be said here as to the spelling of Russian names. The alphabet differing from ours, the work of transliteration is not easy. I have tried to keep as close to the original as possible. Many of the names are known in German forms to the musical public, who are thus accustomed to "Tschaikowsky" for the name of the best-known Russian composer; but there is no need for those who speak the English language to render the first letter by the preposterous "Tsch," adopted originally for German readers because otherwise it would have been given the guttural sound of the German "ch." Similarly, I see no need to render the name of Vitol by its Teutonic form, "Wihtol," nor that of Musorgsky by "Moussorgsky," which is much more cumbersome and not so near the Russian. The name of Cui, on the contrary, I have not given its Russian form, because it is really a French name, "Kúi" being really only an attempt to fit the spelling to Russian pronunciation requirements.

There has hitherto been a great deal of inconsistency in this work of transliteration. I have endeavored at least to be systematic, giving but a single value to each Russian letter. Therefore I have not followed the ordinary custom of using for the one letter "ie" when it occurs as the last vowel in the name of Prokofev, and "e" when it occurs as the second vowel in the name of Arensky. Readers must bear in mind that in every case the letter which is represented here by an unaccented "e" is pre-iotized (save when preceding "i"), so that Cherepnin's name, for example, is pronounced as if spelt "Chyeryepnin." One has only to see it written thus to understand the advisability of representing the

"ye" letter by "e" alone, especially in view of the remarkable degree to which pre-iotization prevails. In the cases of pre-iotized "a" and "u" I have used "ia" and "ú" respectively, refraining from using "á" instead of "ia" because the names of Liadov and Liapunov might not be recognised in the guise of "Ládov" and "Lápunov." For the second letter which exists with the value of "ye" I have employed "é." I may add that the letter for which I have used "j" has the sound of "zh" (the "j" in the French "jamais"); "ch" is soft, the guttural "ch" being rendered by "kh"; "s" is always sibilant, which is why it is so often rendered "ss" by German publishers; "v" is pronounced as "f" at the end of names; and "u" has the value of "oo," wherefore rendered "ou" when names are Westernised.

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Of the composers of the first period, there are but two who call for special remark—Glinka and Dargomijsky. The former is usually regarded as the less important of the two in song-composition (and I wish it to be clearly understood that here work in other branches of music is entirely ignored). So, indeed, he is, in influence, but not in achievement. He is the first of the great Russian song-composers, the first to put forth a song of a quality next below the highest. His early songs show subjection to Italian influence. The accompaniments are of the simplest, the composer having no aim but melody, which all goes into the voice. What he was capable of in this vein is shown in his "Pour toi mon âme" (Romance No. 7), which is in a charming dance-rhythm, with a fine melody, and beautifully written for the voice. But, despite the Italian influence, Glinka was also affected by the folk-song of his native land, and, though a cosmopolitan, may be said to have laid the foundations of a national music; but, because he did so almost without intent, he is scarcely to be regarded as a pioneer. A fine example of his work in this field is "The Skylark," a pure lyric in which the necessary effects are obtained with the simplest means. Glinka does not make difficulties or seek originality, and is not much ahead of his time (even in his own backward country), except in the quality of his work. Little influenced by the achievements of the great Germans, he is to be regarded as a fine lyrist, with plenty of color, and too much sentiment. He composed over sixty songs. By far the best of those I know, and the one on which his fame rests, is "The Midnight Review," a powerful and pictorial ballad, to

words by Jukovsky, depicting a resurrection of Napoleon's soldiery, and the return of "the Little Corporal" to lead them. It is an excellent concert number.

Dargomijsky's songs have been overpraised. He was more of a pioneer than Glinka, though ten years younger; and he may be held to be the greater of the two by reason of his influence on "the Five"; but he was not the equal of Glinka in creative achievement. His songs number over 100; and even in the few with which I am acquainted it is possible to trace many influences—Russian, Oriental and Italian—but also individuality is not lacking. He was enthusiastically nationalistic, and was nearer to the heart of the folk-song than was Glinka. In that vein he was capable of writing with sympathy and charm, creating songs that might well pass as folk-songs. His ballads have been compared to Schumann's; but the comparison is absurd, if I may judge by the one I know, which is his most famous. He has known how to capture the tone and spirit of the East; but he is at his best when displaying dramatic power in brief declamatory phrases. Of his small budget of songs, the one most worthy of favorable comment is the dramatic "Silent Sorrow" (to words by Koltsov), which well illustrates his musical character, while showing his genius at its best. On the technical side, he may have taught something to Musorgsky. If so, that fact is sufficient for his fame.

The smaller men of the time produced nothing that would call for remark in any later period; but for pioneers allowances must be made and a broad view taken of their achievement. Therefore I may draw attention to the pathetic (almost too pathetic) "Sie ist nicht mehr" of Bulakhov; the vigorous and joyous "Winter" of Dúbúk, whose rhythm seems to proclaim it to be based on some Gipsy original; the attractive "Autumn Winds" of Klem; Alabev's famous "Nightingale," introduced into more than one opera; and the best of the songs of Varlamov—the delightful Wanderer's Night Song, the humorous and melodious "Protestations," the spirited "Expectancy," and "The Red Sarafan," which, though based on a folk-air, is quite erroneously regarded as the typical Russian folk-song.

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And now we step right into the great time of Russian song—the age of Rubinstein and Chaikovsky, of Balakirev and Borodin, of Musorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov, six men to the least of whom the previous period offered no one comparable.

The first of these constitutes a problem. Too often one hears Rubinstein spoken of by superior critics with contempt—partly because he was not a national, partly because he wrote potboilers. Those who think that all music by Russian composers should be Russian in tone, those who hate the sentimental, and those who despise the commercial, unite in denunciation; but there is much to be said against their attitude. Is a composer to be forced to be national whether his inclinations lie in that direction or not? If he follow his own taste instead of the national one, is he not entitled to fair criticism? If, again, we must admire more the man who never degrades his art, must we utterly damn him who is less lofty-minded? Let us at least draw a distinction between the artist who sometimes labors for his art and sometimes to make money and him who is nothing but a tradesman. Is it not pardonable for the artist who loves his art to stoop occasionally to provide the means to follow his inclination? Rubinstein may have stooped too frequently and too readily; but he was not always stooping. And, if he too often made of his art a trade, it is not right to judge of his genius by what was written to make money. If uneven, erratic geniuses are judged by their best, as they generally are, is there any reason why those whose work is uneven because they sometimes, but not invariably, wrote for the market, should not be treated similarly?

There are two ways of judging all art work—by highest merit, and by average merit. But few stand high in both respects; of the others, the man with ten first-class works and ninety tenth-class would surely stand higher than the man with nothing either above or below third-class, even though the latter's average would be about eight times the other's. Rubinstein, there is no denying, put out a great deal of rubbish; but set that aside, and there remains a fair winnowing of excellent stuff, none of it of the very first order, but some of it not very far short. His reputation has suffered not merely from his having produced too much for commercial reasons, but also because he gave too free rein to his remarkable fertility of ideas, some of which were charming, though too frequently swamped by the flood of his sentimentality and his readiness to resort to banality. Melody was cheap, the accompaniments were thin, originality was lacking. But, if the composer attached no importance to these compositions, why should we? Let us rather ignore his worst, and consider only his best. Let us, indeed, make it a rule to do so not only with Rubinstein but with all.

I do not know the total number of Rubinstein's songs; but I should think there must be about a couple of hundred. Whether



those to Russian words or those to German words were the more numerous I cannot say; but, of the not inconsiderable number I know, the German outnumber the Russian in the proportion of about 3 to 2. Too many of the German songs were written under the influence of Schumann and Mendelssohn, not very thoroughly assimilated. He might have done better to give more play to his national characteristics instead of being led into somewhat weak imitations of German masters; yet among the songs by Russian poets there is little calling for mention—only "Der Schiffer" (from Op. 8), a good descriptive song in the German manner, and the spirited "Sehnsucht" (from the same set), which, whether or not it entirely conveys the idea of Lermontov's poem, provides a fine song for a good singer. Of the German songs, mention must be made of the two well-known Heine numbers from Op. 32 (the dainty "Du bist wie eine Blume," one of the best settings of this oft-set song, and the passionate "Der Asra"), the delightful "Nacht" (from Op. 76), and the fine setting of "Wer nie sein Brod" (from Op. 91, which consists of 13 solo songs and a quartet from Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister"). The expressive setting of Geibel's "Klinge, klinge, mein Pandero" (a translation from the Spanish of Almeida) cannot be compared with Wolf's; but it may be set not unfitly beside Jensen's. The "Hebräische Melodie" (Byron's "My soul is dark") from Op. 78 also calls for notice for its impressiveness. It may be somewhat heavy; but it is characterised by a high seriousness too often lacking in the composer's work.

But I have not yet mentioned the "Persian Songs" (Op. 34), which constitute his surest title to fame. This quasi-Oriental set, actually by the German poet Bodenstedt, but purporting to be by a Persian versifier Mirza-Schaffy, shows us a very different Rubinstein from the semi-Teutonic composer we have been considering. The best numbers—"Nicht mit Engeln" (D, SC), "Mein Herz schmückt sich" (SC), "Gelb rollt mir" and "Neig', schöne Knospe" (SC)—as also the charming "Es blinkt der Tau" (Op. 72, No. 1) (D), which repeats the closing phrases of "Gelb rollt mir," seem to bring the East into our concert-halls and our salons; nor must it be forgotten that, when Rubinstein did this, he was doing something absolutely novel. Let him then be given due credit as a pioneer, a discoverer, a creator.

If I claim a high place for Rubinstein as a song-composer, it is for "Der Asra" (D), intensely dramatic and expressive and extremely well written for the voice, and for two of the Mirza-Schaffy songs—"Nicht mit Engeln," in which the Eastern touch is light, but wonderfully effective, and "Neig', schöne Knospe,"

a thing of exquisite delicacy, with a beautiful cantilena. When one considers the grace of these songs, vivid with the gorgeous color of the East, and eminently grateful to the singer, it is amazing that they should have been supplanted in the favor of vocalists by things not merely of much less musical value, but also less vocal.

Borodin affords a striking contrast. If Rubinstein overproduced, Borodin underproduced; if Rubinstein was fertile in ideas, cheap, careless, "a Hebrew with an eye for the dollars," a man of genius ready to use his genius as a tradesman, Borodin was a superlatively conscientious artist, refined, aristocratic to the finger-tips, a severe self-critic, unwilling to put his hand to anything of which he could not make a work of art at once striking and original. Considering how small is his output (I have seen 27 songs of his listed in a Russian catalogue; but I am not aware that any but the dozen which I possess have been issued outside of Russia), the number of his songs calling for mention is amazingly high. These are all contained in two volumes—the "Four Melodies" and one of the two collections entitled "Four Songs." The "Melodies" contain such gems as "The Sleeping Princess" (D,SC); the poignant "Dissonance" (D,SC), as beautiful as brief; a setting of Heine's "Vergiftet sind meine Lieder" (D), the spirit of which is admirably caught; and "The Sea" (F,D), which, like so many of his songs, is to words of his own. In the other set are "The Song of the Dark Forest" (SC); a plaintively delicate and exotically beautiful setting of Heine's "Aus meinen Thränen spriessen" (SC); "The Sea Queen" (SC), and the quaint and characteristic "A Fair Garden" (D), obviously from the same hand as "The Sea Queen." Fine as all these are, there are four that stand out well above the rest. "The Sea" approaches nearer to the conventional than the others, but is still unmistakable Borodin, though it is his only effort in the direction of the tumultuously descriptive. "The Sea Queen" is a wonderful essay in atmosphere. It seems to possess the iridescent quality of a Böcklin mermaid. Even more original, and entirely different, unlike anything else of the composer's, is "The Song of the Dark Forest." It is the most national thing he did—one is tempted to say, the most national thing anyone has ever done. Here you have all the savagery of Russia concentrated in a single song, great trampling dissonances that create an impression of unspeakable ferocity. With a deep voice duplicating the piano part, the effect should be tremendous. Starting with 7-4 time, it changes no less than 22 times in the 38 bars of the song, 5-4, 3-4 and 6-4 also occurring.

But the song in which Borodin rises to his greatest height is "The Sleeping Princess." Working, as usual, with an extraordinary economy of means, he describes nothing and suggests everything—the enchanted forest, the figure of the sleeping princess, the low murmur of the tradition that a rescuing prince will come, the final note of skepticism as to the fulfilment of the prophecy that the spell will be broken. Mystery broods over the whole song, which I have no hesitation in classing as one of the very finest songs in existence.

Borodin is so attractive that it is necessary to be on guard against a tendency to rank him higher than one should. Quantity has to be considered as well as quality—not total output, but quantity of great achievement. That is where fastidiousness loses. We are not justified in assuming that an artist could have done more than he did do. What Borodin has done suffices to give him very high rank; but, had he maintained his level of achievement over, say, thrice the output, his standing would be still higher. His qualities are remarkable. His touch is unerring; and, search where one may, it is impossible to find any composer more completely a master of the art of expression by dissonance. He made great use of Eastern modes and rhythms, but always with an artist's reserve. His rhythmic changes are frequent, and he relies greatly on whole-tone sequences and augmented seconds. With all his harmonic strangeness, his sense of beauty never falters, and no hint of the trivial ever intrudes. And, though he made an individual style and preserved it, his technical abilities are not those for which he is to be most esteemed. He is primarily a poet, reinforcing the poetic feeling and imagination with a wonderful warmth and a glowing color, the sense of which is conveyed through his luscious and exotic harmonies. His melody is fittingly sensuous and somewhat Italianate.

By the side of Borodin, Cui is not very significant. His name has a big place in musical history as that of one of "the Five"; but he is on altogether a lower pedestal than the least of the other four. He may have deserved his place for his polemic, hardly for his music. He is not one of those composers who stand high by reason of their finest achievement; he depends rather upon his general level of attainment. He can offer us nothing upon the same plane as Glinka's "Midnight Review" or the best of Rubinstein or the second best of Borodin; but he is almost always melodious and refined, tasteful and elegant. There is less of the folk-song element in his work than in that of his four coadjutors, and (rather amusingly, in view of his fierce fight for nationalism)

his music is not distinctively Russian. I am most struck by his Op. 37, which contains a couple of songs by the German poet Rückert that are of more than ordinary merit. Of "Liebst du" there is a well-known setting by Clara Schumann; but I prefer the Cui. Less characteristic of him is the other, "Wechsel lied," which is unwontedly and surprisingly dramatic.

Balakirev, the real leader of "the Five," was more of a leader than a creator; but he is perhaps at his best in his songs, and has composed two that are in the highest rank; but, save one other, nothing else that ranks above the best of Cui. But the fact that his best is far above Cui's utmost reach places him in a loftier category. He, too, is refined, scrupulous both in choice and treatment of text, self-critical, and possessed of a fine lyrical sense. His taste rarely fails, and his intense nationalism is reflected in his music; but, though he was an inspiration to his followers, he arouses in us rather respect and admiration than rapturous enthusiasm. His influence on the development of the song has been mainly in his contribution towards the independence of the piano part. His sheaf is not heavy. The first set of 20 dates from 1858 to 1860, when he was from 21 to 23 years of age. For so young a man, the finish is remarkable. No. 10, "Oh, come to me" (SC, G), to words by Koltsov, is a passionate song, with a lovely melody; and No. 17, "Old Man's Song" (G), also a Koltsov, makes an excellent baritone item; but the two gems of the collection are No. 16, "The Song of the Goldfish" (G), to words by Lermontov (who, next to Koltsov, was Balakirev's favorite poet), and No. 20, "Dream" (G). The former is a setting of a lyric similar in tenor to Goethe's "Der Fischer" and to Schiller's "Fischer-Knabe." In this dainty song, which has a lovely piano part, Balakirev comes nearer to Borodin than he has done elsewhere. The other is also a thing of rare and delicate beauty. The ten songs published later present nothing to vie with these two, though the passionate intensity of No. 5, "He has conquered my love" (J), shows the composer to very great advantage in quite another vein. Others worthy of note are the descriptive No. 2, "The Desert," the characteristic No. 10, "Burning out is the sunset's red flame" (D), and No. 6, an excellent setting of Heine's "Fichtenbaum" (D).

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The most striking and original of all Russian composers, Musorgsky, lived in misery and died in 1881, at the early age of

42, unknown outside of his native land and too little appreciated in it. His unique work only began to be known to Western Europe about a quarter of a century after his death. Such is, as only too often, the story of genius. Though he died early, he had given perhaps all he had to give, for his last years show a decided enfeeblement of his powers. With the exception of "The Grave," which I think was late work, and "Night," which just preceded his great period, none of the great songs on which his reputation deserves to rest—"Child's Song," "The Orphan Girl," "Gathering Mushrooms," "Left Behind," "To the Dnieper," "Misfortune," and the dozen masterpieces in the three great sets—lies outside the dozen years from 1865 to 1877, during which he wrote all that was most characteristic of him and most typical of his genius.

I have spoken of his work as "unique." It is, in fact, unique in more respects than one, but most of all in this, that no one else of any nationality has in his music got so close to the tones and inflections of natural speech. The achievement is not accidental, but designed, and a result of it is that the songs are peculiarly convincing and direct. He treats voice, words and piano as of equal importance. The accompaniment is not a mere adjunct of the voice, but plays an individual part in the interpretation of the words. Musorgsky was frequently his own poet; and it is fair to surmise that the words often formed themselves in his mind with a musical setting.

Almost the sole basis of his work is the Russian folk-song; and his deep sympathy with suffering and his understanding of the soul of the Russian people make him such a representative of his race as no other song-composer of any country can claim to be. He knows when to exploit and to make most telling use of the monotony that is so often a feature of the Russian folk-song; but also he can be gloriously melodious. His harmonies frequently anticipate Debussy. His modulations are daring, his scale combinations uncommon. Often his chords seem to be chosen haphazard, sometimes in violation of "the rules of the game"; and this has led to some silly talk of his lack of musical equipment. The fact was that he never let convention stand in his way. His object was to illustrate his text; and he took what best served his purpose. As, moreover, his perception of requirements was particularly keen, the formalist who wishes to improve his work by regularising it, almost invariably takes the life out of it. There is no chance in Musorgsky's work: there was intention in all he did; and, even where there is no obvious effort, he obtains his effects. Never has there been a more individual utterance, never

a greater master of psychological delineation or of depiction of mood in music, never one who gets more thoroughly to the very heart of his subject. Whether merry or tragic, satirical or gloomy, idealistic or realistic, he was always sincere. He concealed nothing, but laid bare the very soul of the things he portrayed; and always the means were of the simplest. There is nothing superfluous in Musorgsky: he would rather give too little than too much.

His variety is extraordinary. He is seen in hilarious mood in that capital concert number, the Flea song (Mephistopheles' ditty, from Goethe's "Faust") (WB), a late song, and not characteristic; and in a bitterly satirical mood in "The Musicians' Peep-show" (WB), which, with its 337 bars, is exceeded in length among the songs before me only by Prokofev's "Ugly Duckling" (which has 368), but which, because of its delightful travesty of various critical views, does not bore one. He is lightly humorous in "The Seminarist" (SM, WB), which shows the mind of the divinity student divided between his lesson and the thought of his teacher's daughter—an excellent bit of fun, though it is of course open to superfine critics to object that this is not the province of music. Love-songs were not much in Musorgsky's line; but "Night" (WB, SM), which dates from 1864, and foretells some of the composer's later harmonic developments, is one. In "Silently floated a spirit" (WB, SM) we have a lovely imaginative lyric; in the dainty and beautifully simple "Child's Song" (SC, WB) and the charming "By the Don" (SM, WB) a brace of delightful lyric pictures; and in the powerful "To the Dnieper" (SM, WB), an embodiment of the brutal and bloodthirsty spirit that inspires or is aroused by the bitter racial hatreds of Central Europe. The quaintly attractive "Magpie" (SM, WB) is hard to classify; but there can be no doubt about the "Gopak" (D, WB, SC), a picture of peasant life to an infectious Cossack dance-rhythm, a thing of remarkable verve, with alternating outbursts of hilarity and savage hate. In quite other vein are the two fine lullabies, "The Peasant Child's Cradle-song" (WB, SC), and "Eremushka's Cradle-song" (WB, SC, D), into the former of which some enthusiasts read a great deal more than, I confess, I am able to do.

This brief catalogue may serve to show that Musorgsky did fine work in a variety of styles; but I have not yet touched upon any of the species in which his best work was done, the studies of infant psychology, the poems of despair, the songs of imaginative morbidity, and the essays in realism.



In this last-mentioned class, there is the quaint "Gathering Mushrooms" (D, WB), with an attractive melody on a folk-song basis. It is a song of fine contrasts, and shows admirably the malice actuating the singer. Excellent as it is, it is ordinary beside that amazing thing "The Orphan Girl" (SM, WB), which stands quite in the front rank of Musorgsky's songs. Here he threw tradition and convention to the winds. He wanted to present the very whine of the beggar; and he has succeeded to perfection. There is scarcely more than a suggestion of melody; the song is little more than a succession of appeals that are wonderfully faithful in their realism. Without the text the music would be nothing; with it, it is everything it should be. It is less a song than a cry; and, though I have a tolerably wide acquaintance with the work done in this branch of music, I know no other at once so poignant and so true. "The Idiot's Love-song" is often spoken of as if it were the composer's finest achievement in this vein; but, to my thinking, it stands on an altogether lower level.

Amongst the poems of despair may be grouped "The Grave" (WB), rightly described as a "musical picture," the characteristic "Misfortune" (WB, D), composed in 1877, being the last song in which he showed his powers still at the full, and the terrible song variously entitled "Left Behind" and "After the Battle" (M, WB). This antedates by a year the first three of the "Songs and Dances of Death," by the side of which it is worthy to stand. It was written to accompany Vereshchagin's famous painting, which the artist destroyed at the request of Tsar Alexander II. The words are by Golenishchev-Kutusov, the poet of the "Songs and Dances" and the "Sunless" set. It depicts a soldier lying dead upon the battlefield, food for crows, and his widow rocking her child to an assurance that she will bake a cake for the father's return, and, at the close, evokes once more the vision of the dead body. It is a song of wonderful contrasts from stark ugliness and hopelessness to a haunting lullaby tune.

These are not the only "poems of despair": there are also the half-dozen great songs of that wonderful set known as "Sunless," dating from the same year as "Left Behind." From 1874 onward the unfortunate composer seems to have been sunk in gloom, and all his work is of the deepest pessimism. Than this set to which I have now to refer one may search in vain throughout all song literature for anything more deeply steeped in depression. It is purely subjective; but its musical value is unquestionable. The first number, "Interior" (SM), pictures a man dying in a hospital, and the chords convey chokingly the hopelessness of the white-

washed room; No. 2, "Lost in the Crowd," gives an extraordinary sense of suffering, but nevertheless hardly bears comparison with the other songs of the set. No. 4, "Ennui" (SM), voices its illimitable pessimism in a vocal line that is little more than recitative. The three remaining songs are of the highest calibre. "Retrospect" (SM), with no less poignancy than those I have already referred to, has more beauty; "Elegy" (SM) has a greater harmonic interest, and makes a beautiful use of the death-knell; and "On the Water" (SC) makes an unsurpassable close to a magnificent, if unduly depressing, set.

"The Songs and Dances of Death" are not of the same order of introspective hopelessness. Rather are they songs of Death's triumph. They are highly dramatic, but not gloomy. The first three numbers of the four constituting the set were composed in 1875; the remaining one, two years later. The least of the four is sufficient to rank the composer among the great ones in this branch of music; and the first three stand on the highest level of the Parnassus of song. The first, "Trepak" (SC, D), describes Death coming to a poor, drink-sodden peasant, tempting him with the rhythms of the national dance, the trepak, and then lulling him to sleep with a soothing cradle-song. The picture is a wonderful one, heightened by the howling of the tempest, which is Death's minister; and the song ends beautifully with a forecast of renewed sunshine, of Nature smiling, and of the lark singing its song of happiness. Amongst all the supreme efforts of Musorgsky, this seems to me the finest, *primus inter pares*. The "Berceuse" (SM, D) is terrible in its poignancy. It describes Death coming to rob a mother of her child, and, in defiance of her, lulling the child to its eternal sleep. It rises to a wonderful height of tragedy. The "Serenade" (SM, D) is very different. The most lyrical of the four, it shows Death wooing as a lover; but it too culminates in a dramatic outburst that is very effective. The final number (SM), showing Death reviewing his victims on the battlefield, is less subtle and more conventional than the others, and lacks their terrible feeling of intimacy with the Lord of Life.

Though the set "In the Nursery" was composed seven years before the first of the "Songs and Dances of Death," I have left it till last, so as not to close my notice of Musorgsky on too gloomy a note. "In the Nursery" is the most remarkable picture of the soul of a child in all song-literature, and in rendering the inflections of a child's voice it is absolutely incomparable. In these songs Musorgsky is a child, writing from the child's point of view. The words are his own, as well as the music. They contain his most

human work. Some of them—the first two and “The Doll’s Lullaby” (SM)—are positive masterpieces. The minutest changes of tone in the utterance are rendered with extraordinary fidelity. Without the words the music means nothing; with them, it is wonderfully illuminating. There is little suggestion of melody, for the reason that the child’s speech is more faithfully rendered without it. This set was unlike anything that had previously been done in song; and, it may be added, unlike anything that has been done since.

It is in the first two numbers, “Tell me” and “In the corner,” that Musorgsky’s mastery of the inflections of the human voice are shown to perfection. They must therefore take rank with his greatest and most representative work in song. “Tell me,” beginning in 7-4 time, undergoes 27 changes in 53 bars, 3-4, 3-2, 5-4, 6-4 and common time all being employed, the rhythmic pattern being changed with every change in the course of the child’s thought. No. 2 contrasts very piquantly the chiding utterances of the nurse with the whine of the child, alternately pleading and insolent. No. 3 (SC) shows the child intrigued by the death of a beetle. Here the structure is somewhat more formal and there is an added beauty; but it is not on beauty that these remarkable songs depend. No. 4, “The Doll’s Lullaby,” introduces a lovely piece of melody, which is entirely in place. No. 5, “The Evening Prayer,” is a very amusing number. The mechanical way in which the child goes through the prayer that has been taught him, remembering all his relatives, and putting in a special plea for his beloved grandmother, who, no doubt, thoroughly spoils him, only, after all, to forget to pray for himself, so that he is obliged to appeal to his nurse for instruction, is exquisitely humorous. These songs give one a very pleasing impression of the inmost soul of the composer.

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Setting aside Musorgsky, who stands by himself, the masters of Russian song are Balakirev, Borodin, Chaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Grechaninov, Rakhmaninov and Medtner. Of these, the two I have next to deal with are in a class above the others, worthy to rank with the best of the masters of German song, from some of whom Chaikovsky got so much and from whom Rimsky-Korsakov took so little.

Chaikovsky, like Rubinstein, has been rejected by the followers of “the Five”; but outside of Russia he is regarded,

quite wrongly, as the typical Russian composer. In reality, the source of the appreciation of him is to be found in that very cosmopolitanism which the Nationalists resent. He is, indeed, a Russian, but a Russian cosmopolitanised. There is more folk-song basis in his music than one would suspect; but it is not used in a Russian way. His principal characteristics are native enough—his pessimism, his weariness, his melancholy, his sentiment; but he lacks something of two other Russian characteristics, savagery and wild hilarity.

But, after all, why look for national traits, when you have the man? Is it not even more to express oneself than to mirror one's nation? And Chaikovsky is supremely personal: not even Schumann is more subjective. His songs total very nearly 120; and it is worthy of note that his quality varied little from start to close of his career. Good and bad occur throughout; the masterpieces are not, as in the case of Musorgsky, to be sought in only one stage of his career. Thus I find four in Op. 6, one each in Opp. 16, 25, 27, 37, 47, 60, three in Op. 65, and one in his last set, Op. 73. The successful ones are worked out with an admirable fitness; but, splendid as is the method, the material is not always equal to it. There is now and then a touch of tawdriness and cheapness, a note of pretentiousness, a lack of compactness in the treatment; but in the main he observes a fine polish, even if it strikes one as being rather acquired than natural. His greatest gift is his emotional quality; and there is not much vocal music where it is exhibited more effectively or with surer touch, though it has to be admitted that the intensity, deep as it appears to be, does not maintain its hold as does that of Musorgsky. Perhaps the appeal is too sensuous, and the music too highly charged with tragic feeling, for the effect to be lasting.

The prevailing mood of intense melancholy is usually conveyed in exquisite melody backed by lusciously chromatic accompaniments, which in many cases possess considerable independence. As a rule, they serve the purpose of creating the right atmosphere. Considerable importance attaches to the length and variety of his preludes and postludes, the former generally aiming at the arousing of the proper mood in the listener; the latter, at rounding off the drama or closing up the picture or adding a musical comment upon the poem. In this respect the composer shows himself a disciple of Schumann.

Excellent examples of Chaikovsky's deep, tearful sadness are afforded by three of the numbers in Op. 6—"Speak not," "Ah, weep no more" (D), and the well-known setting of Goethe's

"Wilhelm Meister" lyric "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt" (D)—and also by Op. 37, No. 1, "Regret"; "Was I not a blade of grass" (from Op. 47); "Déception" and "Les Larmes" (both from Op. 65); and "Weil'ich" (from Op. 73, his very last song). Two of these—the last-named and "Regret"—are songs of the finest quality. He is seen in a daintier and very delightful mood in "Absence" (from Op. 60) and the joyful "Morning" (from Op. 63); but Op. 60 contains a greater than "Absence" in "The Song of the Gipsy Girl," which most beautifully unites melody and feeling. Two lovely pictures are "A Night in July" (from Op. 63), which, though somewhat sentimental, conveys the scene and the feeling admirably, and "Evening" (Op. 27, No. 4) (SC), which is a perfect piece of work on Chaikovsky's very highest level. A fine invocation "To Sleep" forms No. 6 of the same set. In Op. 6 a setting of Heine's "Warum?" is an admirable thing splendidly worked up to a telling climax. In Op. 16 is the saccharine "Warte noch," of an exceeding beauty, marred by a touch of tawdriness. Much finer, in the same set, is the glorious "Cradle-song" to a poem by Maikov (set also by Arensky), one of the quaintest and loveliest and most original of lullabies. In Op. 25 is "The Canary" (D, SC), full of color and with an Oriental touch that seems less spontaneous than that of the real masters of Russian Orientalism. Op. 38 contains the fascinating "Don Juan's Serenade"; in Op. 47 the finest thing is "Benediction" (No. 5), which is constructed with masterly skill; and in Op. 54 is the impressive "Legend" (SC), which, by means of modal harmony, achieves a fine simplicity and devotional ecstasy.

The most popular and successful exploiter of the Oriental in music is undoubtedly Rimsky-Korsakov. Though almost a conservative when compared with Musorgsky, he is one of the most striking of Russian figures by reason of his perfect mastery of a medium that was almost original with him and in which he has never been equalled. One may soon get to know the trick of it; but the fact remains that no one else has done it so well or made it so completely a thing of beauty. His harmonies are voluptuous and always appropriate; and he has the art of making them appear unusual and of creating an impression of extreme unorthodoxy. Like Borodin, who was his nearest affinity among "the Five," he particularly affects augmented seconds. Though a Nationalist, his outlook and his tastes differ from those of Balakirev and Musorgsky; and his Russianism is never so flagrant as to jar on the ears of Western Europeans. His songs do not smell of the land, as do Musorgsky's. Sometimes his melody is too light for the glowing accompaniment; at others, it is super-

lately beautiful. In feeling for beauty he must be hard to surpass. He was a prolific worker, and is credited with the composition of nearly 200 songs, though nothing like that number has come westward. His range is exceptionally wide, as is seen when I come to name those calling for remark. These are a couple of lovely cradle-songs, from Op. 2 and Op. 4 respectively, the earlier (D) figuring also in the opera "Pskovitianka"; the four glowing numbers of Op. 3 (Nos. 2 and 4, SC; No. 3 (SM)—this last, "The Cloud and the Mountain," being set also by Rubinstein); a fine Heine, Op. 4, No. 2 (MB), with a galloping accompaniment; the splendidly pictorial "Night" (from Op. 8); the effectively realistic "Like mountains" (D), from Op. 46; the characteristically colorful "Maid and the Sun" (D, SM), from Op. 50; the sombre "The rainy day is past" (D), from Op. 51; things of delicate beauty in Nos. 1 and 2 of Op. 40 (MB) and the two of Op. 56 (MB); and such attractive, if less easily classifiable numbers as "Come to the realm of roses," "Like to the sky" (SM), from Op. 7, and No. 2 of Op. 39 (MB). And let it be noted that, despite the popular opinion that this composer is of no particular account when not employing the Oriental idiom, not one of the best of these—"Der Fichtenbaum" (Op. 3, No. 1), "Night," "The Angel" (Op. 40, No. 2, a song with a subject akin to that of Franck's "L'ange et l'enfant"), and "Summer Night's Dream" (Op. 56, No. 2)—is Oriental in its technique, and that yet these four are enough to make any man's reputation as a great song-composer. But, for all that, the opinion that he is at his best in the exotic is not mistaken, for I have yet to name the two finest songs he ever wrote, two that stand apart both in kind and in quality, two than which it is hard to imagine anything lovelier. These are Koltsov's "Eastern Romance" (D, SM), from Op. 2, dating from 1865, and Meia's "Hebrew Love-song" (SC), from Op. 7, also an early number, dating 1867. The former has been set also by Rubinstein and Glazunov; but Rimsky-Korsakov's version stands alone. The latter is little more than melody, and serves to show how far splendid melody can go. No better Oriental song has ever been composed.

I suppose it is scarcely necessary to say that the "Fichtenbaum" which I have mentioned is a setting of Heine's famous lyric. In this Rimsky-Korsakov competes with many celebrated composers; but, of all the settings I know (and they include two by Liszt, and one each by Franz, Lassen, Streicher, Marx, Medtner, Balakirev, Grieg, Backer-Gröndahl, and as many more), it seems to me that no other is so satisfying.



After such a blaze of genius in this period, it is not surprising to find a distinct falling off in the next. To compare with the great men from Rubinstein upwards, we can set only Grechaninov, Arensky, Catoire, Tanéev and Glazunov, and not one of these is possessed of the lofty genius of the best of Rubinstein's contemporaries. When we come to the fourth period—the period of Rakhmaninov, Medtner, Vasilenko and Miaskovsky—we shall find a further numerical falling off, but a compensating advance in quality.

Tanéev, who has left about forty songs, is a classic who aims at simplicity. Standing apart from the romantic spirit, he appeals rather to the head than to the heart. His merits are largely those of form and structure and perfect mastery of his means; but these are not the qualities most charming or most desirable in a composer. Of his sincerity there can be no doubt, even though he was not at all a Nationalist. Of his half-dozen songs before me, there are but two that call for remark; but these two suffice to put him on a high plane as a song-composer. The one is the finely conceived "Minuet" (D), which, by its colorful quality, stands apart from his other songs. The other is the effectively descriptive "Winterfahrt," the last number of the Polonsky set, written in 1910, and published a year later (R). It is finely written for the voice.

With Liadov I must confess to being disappointed. His children's songs, which have been highly praised, are trivial and, most of them, of poor quality. The one song he offers which is of sufficient merit to demand notice is his No. 1 of Op. 1 (WB), a set composed in 1873. It is a setting of a song of Pushkin's that has been set more by these composers than any other lyric—more even than Fet's "Greeting" or Koltsov's "The Rose and the Nightingale" or Heine's "Fichtenbaum" or the same poet's "Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'." Liadov's rivals in the setting of this are Balakirev, Rakhmaninov and Saminsky. Strangely enough, the least satisfactory of the four is the Balakirev.

Of the half-dozen songs on which I have to form my opinion of Liapunov, there is but one that appeals greatly to me. This is "Les trois sources," No. 1 of Op. 30. The opening lines of the poem (which is by Pushkin) and the character of the three springs are finely and beautifully differentiated, and it differs from most other songs of the highest quality in that it is admirably suited to the concert platform. Liapunov is essentially a writer for the piano. One can gather as much from his songs.

Arensky is one of the men whom the followers of "the Five" can never sufficiently depreciate. Like Rubinstein, he is

anathema to them, partly because he is conservative in tendency, partly because of his readiness to write sentimental rubbish for drawing-room exploitation. Not of any particular originality, the influence of Schumann and Chaïkovsky weighs heavily upon him. Regarding most of his work, I am in agreement with his disparagers. It is at best graceful and pleasing, at worst vapid and banal; but, tawdry as he often is, it would be unjust to fail to recognise that now and then he attains great heights. His "Little Fish's Song" (D, SC) loses by comparison with the Balakirev setting, to which I have already referred under a slightly different title; but it has a limpid beauty that makes it worthy of mention. Of higher class is "The Wolves," a Tolstoi ballad of mysticism and superstition, the spirit of which is most admirably caught. But by far the finest of his songs is "But lately in dance," to a poem of Fet's. Here we have lovely melody and treatment both beautiful and dramatic, the varying atmosphere of the dance, the death, and the dream being finely realised. This is one of the most delightful things in the whole range of Russian song; and to deny its beauty because the composer has done a good deal of inferior work is either fatuous stupidity or sheer prejudice. His "Berceuse" and his "Sad Little Bird," from Op. 59 (Ch), are two others that must be mentioned.

Catoire affords a marked contrast. Of French parentage, his name has been Russianized to Katuar, which is the nearest equivalent. Though educated in Germany, it is French texts that he has set, and his manner of treating them, though markedly individual, approximates more to the French than to the German. His is work that repays study, and that does not reveal its beauty without. As Keats is a poet for poets, so, I should say, Catoire is a composer for composers. His Op. 22, published in 1913 (R), contains four settings of Verhaeren and two of Verlaine. All of them are of great difficulty; but three are of quite exceptional merit. These are No. 2, "Lassitude," of a bizarre beauty; No. 5, "Pieusement," of a deeply tragic tone; and No. 6, "Le Gel," which is, like the others, strongly impressionistic. The words of all three are by Verhaeren, which serves to show that the composer is more at home with the Belgian master than with Verlaine. In all of them a fantastic spirit displays itself; but the poems are nevertheless finely felt. I am sorry not to know more of Catoire. If he has given the world other volumes of the high quality of this, he deserves to rank very high indeed; but, for aught I know to the contrary, this may be a solitary effort.

Vitol is not really a Russian, but a Lett. As he began by setting German songs, worked on a large number of Russian ones, and has of recent years identified himself with his own Lettish people, putting to music the songs of his country's poets, he may be claimed by three nations; and I dare say that he is, like most cultured Letts, trilingual. Though he has gone largely to Lettish folk-music for his material, he is generally regarded as a Russian composer—at least, he was, prior to the war—and so cannot well be excluded here. In his Op. 5, composed 1890, and published 1892 (MB), to German words, No. 2, "Schlimme Ahnung," is very attractive. Op. 7 (MB), a set to Lettish words, contains a charming "Berceuse" and a "Chant du ruisseau" that combines a lovely melody for the voice with a delightful accompaniment. But far beyond these is "Meine Laute," to the words of a Lettish poet, Johansen. This is of a deep melancholy, characteristic of the race. In this song, scarcely surpassable in its own gray way, Lettish music has to its credit a little masterpiece of the finest quality.

Grechaninov may be described as an eclectic. His tastes are catholic. He reaches out one hand to Chaïkovsky and the other to the Nationalists. The influence of the folk-song of his country and of its liturgical chants is balanced by the influence of French and German music, and the result is not always satisfactory. He is neither markedly individual nor very original; and he is not most impressive when he is most pretentious or ambitious. When he is simple and direct, he is charming. Thus, in "Snowflakes," a set of ten children's songs (G), we have three excellent numbers—No. 5, "Hop o' my thumb," the daintiness of which recalls a song of higher quality, Wolf's "Nixe Binsefuss" (one wonders whether or not one should attribute the resemblance to coincidence); No. 8, "Frost," which, for all its simplicity, is quite dramatic; and No. 10, the exceedingly graceful "Song of the Fairy." Other attractive songs are "The Siren" (D), with something of the siren's fascination; the lovely Op. 20, No. 2, "No more carols the sweet nightingale" (D); all four numbers from his best set, Op. 5; the glorious "My Native Land" (Op. 1, No. 4) (SM), reminiscent of Borodin's "Dark Forest"; and, from the Baudelaire set, Op. 48 (G), composed in 1909, the showy "Hymne," the operatically dramatic "Je t'adore," the beautiful "Harmonie du soir," and the powerful "La mort." If anyone wishes to know on what grounds Grechaninov deserves to be ranked highly, let him consider the last-mentioned two, "My Native Land," the last of Op. 5 ("Epicedium," a thing of dolorous beauty), and, above all, the

first of the same set, "The Steppe" (SC, D), which fully deserves its reputation as the finest of Grechaninov's songs. Remarkably pictorial, and affording a beautiful contrast between the melancholy and monotony of the desert and the thought of home in a happier and lovelier land, it is particularly grateful for the singer, and assuredly stands in the front rank of Russian songs.

Glazunov, as a song-composer, is somewhat underrated; and here again the bitter antagonism between the two schools that has always characterised Russian musical criticism is largely responsible. One of the causes of his depreciation is that, though he was originally a Nationalist, the rising hope of the school, the proclaimed successor to Balakirev and Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov, he became a formalist, a Westerner, an advocate of "pure" music. Perhaps even in his earlier phase he had been something of a classicist. One can see the tendency in the Pushkin "Chanson" in Op. 26, while its companion (a "Romance orientale," also by Pushkin) is a bit of exquisite work in a supposedly Eastern manner. As no other of the songs of Glazunov known to me (he wrote but few) is of as high a quality as these two, his abandonment of his earlier manner is to be regretted. As he became more orthodox, more attentive to form, more architectonic, he lost his warmth, his color, and much of his inspiration. I must not conclude without a mention of his barbaric "Spanish Song" and his effective setting of Heine's "Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'," both of them contained in the Bessel collection of five songs. The latter compares more than favorably with either the Rimsky-Korsakov setting or the Bleichmann.

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I have now arrived at the younger school, of whom the oldest, if still alive, is now 54 years of age, while the youngest is still a year under 30. The oldest is Koreshchenko, of whom I have but three songs on which to base my opinion. Incomparably the best of these is the "Autumn Melody." If I may judge by this, the characteristics of Koreshchenko are Chaikovskian. Here we have the same sense and exposition of beauty, the same touch of woe. It is a song that not merely recalls the master, but that vies with his finest achievement. If Koreshchenko had many of this quality he would be a first-rate man; but the others I have to judge by do not serve to bear out that lofty estimate. Of Katz I know nothing but one fine song, to words used also by

Musorgsky. To say that Katz has been the more successful in this case is not to say that he ranks as the greater composer.

Vasilenko began as a member of the Nationalist school and drifted thence to sympathy with French impressionism. He is a good deal of an eclectic; and, among other influences, that of Chaikovsky is frequently in evidence, while there are occasional touches of Orientalism. He works with a firm hand. His attractive and finely felt "The Reapers" (Op. 2, No. 2) would alone suffice to give him a high place among Russian song-writers; but even finer is the fifth of the "Invocations" (J), "Dream," one of the most beautiful songs of which I have occasion to speak. Its gentle rocking accompaniment, with its different time for the two hands, requires accurate playing for obtaining the proper effect.

Rakhmaninov, the best-known of the Russian song-composers of to-day, is a conservative romantic. He again is an eclectic, deeply influenced by Chaikovsky. His earlier work shows some originality, particularly in modulation; but his later songs are more conventional. The fact that he is a great pianist has had its effect upon his songs; for his accompaniments are difficult and sometimes of more importance than the vocal part. His melody is plastic and often charming; but one must not look to him for examples of harmonic daring. His technique is modern German modified by Russian folk-music influence. He possesses considerable descriptive power and a sense of landscape that is constantly peeping out in his best work. Two songs to be mentioned in Op. 4 are No. 4, "Songs of Grusia" (SM), a beautifully realised setting of the Pushkin already referred to as set by Liadov, and No. 5, the noble "The drooping corn" ("O thou billowy harvest-field") (F, SC, D), a song full of deep national feeling. Another fine song is No. 4 of Op. 8, "The Soldier's Wife" (SM); and this possesses moreover a touch of novelty. Op. 14 contains two particularly good items, No. 9, "As fair is she" (SM), a finely descriptive experiment in Orientalism, and No. 11, "Floods of Spring" (F, D), a great concert song, which, for its beauty, its sonority, and its descriptiveness, ranks with the very best songs by modern composers. The first song of Op. 21, "Fate" (G), based on Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, has been unduly depreciated, perhaps because of its popularity. As a matter of fact, it, the two from Op. 14 just mentioned, and "Oh, no, I pray" (D), are sufficient to give Rakhmaninov his high place among the song-composers of the day. The last-named song is a passionate love-cry of Chaikovskian stamp. It figures in Op. 26

(No. 7), a set which contains also the deeply felt "Christ is risen" (SM).

Cherepnin is yet another eclectic, the eclecticism extending to both idea and style. He has written some fifty songs, and is a master of the technical side of his art. "Stars of radiant night," Op. 1, No. 2 (D), is a song of great and simple beauty; "Quiet Night," Op. 8, No. 3 (D), is a slight, delicate picture that, though not free from the drawing-room taint, is attractive; and the Shelley-Bal-mont song, "To Music," though similarly marred, is a noteworthy effort. Of higher grade than any of these is the Maïkov poem "Menæceus," Op. 26, No. 2, which is a particularly fine song, though one that appeals to the intellect rather than to the feelings, because in writing it the composer was governed less by emotional stress than by an artistic sense of propriety.

I am not aware that anyone has ever said a good word for Koeneman; but that shall not prevent me from doing so. He is frankly a descriptive composer; but to that there should be no objection, so long as the work is well done. Glinka's "Midnight Review," for example, comes within the category. If that be deserving of praise, equally so is Koeneman's "When the King went forth to War" (Op. 7, No. 6), an excellent piece of work of its kind. His "Blacksmith," another effort in the same vein, is also worthy of mention.

Of all the composers dealt with in this article, Medtner is the least Russian. It is not merely that he is of German race, and at first devoted himself almost entirely to the musical interpretation of German lyrics (though the first poem he set was one by Lermontov); but that his musical inspiration comes almost entirely from Germany, scarcely at all from his native land. He stands, in fact, in the line of the great German composers, the direct successor of Brahms. Of later years he has turned to Russian poets for his song material; but the music has remained to no small extent German. Medtner is a classicist, free from the classicist's besetting sins, for he writes with both inspiration and gusto. His taste is almost flawless, and, even when most inspired, he appears to be holding himself severely in check. In his later works he shows a tendency to become unduly pianistic, and the Brahmsian influence on both rhythm and harmony shows a decline. His technical equipment and his harmonic ingenuity are extraordinary; but of much greater consequence is his deep poetical feeling. For all his formal classicism, he has a romantic spirit; but in his impersonality he stands at the opposite pole from Schumann. Perhaps his most remarkable quality is



his variety, resulting from his notable fertility of idea. Scarcely two of his songs seem to be from the one mint, so that it can hardly be said that there is a Medtner manner.

Of the early German work, attention must be directed to the joyful "Mailed" (D) and the expressive "Erster Verlust" (D), both in Op. 6; to the unconventionally accented setting of Heine's grim "Lieb' Liebchen" (D) and the brilliantly pianistic "Lyrisches Intermezzo," a setting of "Der Fichtenbaum" unlike any other, both of these being in Op. 12; and to the majestic, Wolfian "Einsamkeit" (D, R) from Op. 18, and (from the same set) "Das Veilchen" (R), which offers a happy combination of beauty and the dramatic. Published the same year (1910) as Op. 18, Op. 19 gives us in its opening number, "Gruss" (R), a fine poem treated with deep feeling; and mention must be made of another "Greeting" (R, D), delightfully lyrical, set to a poem by Fet that has also been essayed by Rimsky-Korsakov and Arensky. This is in Op. 24, which contains also the Beautiful "Willow" (R) and a "Twilight" (R) which to no small degree captures the magic of that mystic time of day. In the Pushkin poems, Op. 29 (R), the composer attains an unusual simplicity both rhythmically and harmonically, this set containing a couple of fine numbers in the setting of "Lines written during a sleepless night," in which dread is eloquent, and "The Call," magnificent in its sombre intensity. These two and "Willow" and "Twilight" should suffice for the reputation of any man; but best of all is the masterpiece in the Nietzsche set, Op. 19, which ranks with the best of modern songs.

When Miaskovsky is reached, we are among the comparatively young men, for he was born only in 1881. He is an interesting composer, contemplative, like Schumann and Lili Boulanger, but not so personal as either, and with no inclination to exploit himself as Chaikovsky may be said to have done. Sometimes exquisitely delicate, sometimes gloomy, he is always musically attractive, always lyrical. In his "Skizzen" (published 1913, R), Nos. 2 and 3, "Das Tal" and "Pan," are both dainty and pleasing. In the Gippius set (R), "Einförmigkeit" is a masterly thing that might have been signed by Wolf and might be slipped in among his best work without any sense of a decline in quality.

Stravinsky is debatable ground. In view of his originality, his contempt for tradition, his preference for the ugly, and his aggressiveness, it is perhaps natural that he should be either worshipped or detested. The inventor of a novel musical idiom, the most individual composer before the public to-day, an experi-

menter who recognises no bounds to his endeavor, the employer of a method of almost brutal directness for the expression of his ideas, Stravinsky is indeed a man who counts. He is perhaps the most objective of composers; and what he gives us is pure music unaffected by conventional ideas of what music ought to be. It may be doubted if the art can ever again be quite the same as it was before Stravinsky. One of his greatest qualities is his humor, which gives added point to his boldness of conception. His development from his first song, composed in 1908, to the latest published, composed in 1919, is interesting. The first set, Op. 6, consists of two excellent numbers, "The Novice" (D), commonplace in comparison with what was to follow, but effective, and "A Song of the Dew" (J), which has some fine things in it. In the songs that followed he is to be seen feeling his way towards an idiom of his own. In the "Pribaoutki," composed in 1914 and published three years later, he has achieved it. This is surely one of the most extraordinary and original sets of songs ever published, and assuredly the most humorous. These "chansons plaisantes" are, in their original form, to the accompaniment of four stringed and four wood-wind instruments; and though (naturally) the piano version (arranged by the composer) cannot give all the color of the complete score, it is well worthy of consideration on its own merits. There are four numbers; and each of them is a gem of grotesque humor, especially "Le Four," which narrates the singular antics of the poultry as they are being baked, to the upsetting of the peace of the kitchen, a remarkable piece of post-impressionism that surely is without equal in the domain of musical farce. Serious-minded people may say that this sort of triviality is not worth doing; but almost anything is worth doing that is done with perfect art and with an entire freedom from convention.

I do not find the piquancy and attractiveness of these quaint children's songs in the sets that followed, culminating in the "Quatre Chants Russes" (Ch), dating from 1918 and '19, and published in 1920. I have made a point throughout this article of mentioning only what seemed to me particularly worthy of praise; but I shall depart from my rule to deal with this extraordinary set. I enjoyed the "chansons plaisantes" because in an extraordinary way their outrageous antics seemed entirely appropriate to the verses they were illustrating, and because their novelty was really diverting; but here in the "Chants Russes" I find only meaningless jargon, tunelessness, discords that are unforgivable because they are utterly ineffective. They do not impress one by their originality as do the songs of the "Pribaoutki,"

but rather oppress one by their striving to do or say something out of the way. They remind me of a child's scribbblings in a book or of obscene writings on a wall of a chamber in which a decent-minded man does not care to make any undue stay. These songs have but one merit: they are mercifully short, like almost all Stravinsky's vocal numbers.

Saminsky is a Jew, who, unlike most Jewish composers, has turned his attention not merely to the poets writing in the language of his native country, but also to Hebrew and Yiddish versifiers. He has built largely on the Russian-Jewish folk-song, and now and then we are reminded of Musorgsky. He began, in "Songs of my Youth," with songs by Russian poets, and only later turned to the Yiddish, in the "First Hebrew Song-Cycle"; but the earlier efforts are more pleasing than the later ones. The earliest in date, composed in 1908, is a setting of the "Georgian Song" of Pushkin, Op. 2, No. 1 (C), which has also been set by Balakirev and Liadov and Rakhmaninov. It ranks with the best of these, beautifully combining feeling and charm. One of his late songs, from "Olga's Song-Cycle," is also to be mentioned for its finely atmospheric quality. This is "O Nebulous Mist," Op. 18, No. 2 (C), dating 1917, to words by Sologub. But the thing that entitles Saminsky to high rank among song-composers is another of the "Songs of my Youth," his setting of Balmont's "Enchanted Grotto," Op. 2, No. 2 (C), composed in 1909, the rare beauty of which is not disturbed or spoiled by its elements of popularity.

I am not sure that Prokofev, one of the naughty boys of the modern musical world, is not a classic at heart. Not much of the impish freakishness with which he is generally credited is to be found in his songs. His Balmont set, Op. 36 (G), composed in 1921, contains in "The Voice of Birds" a very graceful number of delicate beauty; but it is the last of the set that gives him a right to rank among the great. This is "The Pillars," a terrible, barbaric thing, characterised by a sort of resolute savagery. The man who could write that will surely have more to give us. I do not think it too much to hope for something of the supremest quality from him.

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As in the first period there were some meritorious composers whom I was content to gather together into a single paragraph, there are others in the later periods—von Bach, whom I take to be a sort of Russian Chaminade, the prolific Ippolitov-Ivanov, the

eclectic Sokolov, the prematurely deceased Kalinnikov, the popular Bleichmann, Tiniakov (a composer who is known to me only by a single song), the earnest Glière, the fluent Sakhnovsky, the pleasing Zolotarev, and, youngest of all, Ornstein, with his fancy for thick note-clusters. Perhaps, if I knew some of these better, I might rate them more highly; but I am not prepared to take any man's reputation on trust.

Besides these, there are composers in the first three periods whose work has not seemed to me to call for even this abbreviated mention; but there is one of this class—the only one belonging to the latest period—whom I must mention, if only to show that his omission is not due to an oversight. This is Gnesin, whom some critics regard as one of the greatest of modern song-composers. All I can say is that the song I have had before me is far from warranting such a claim. It seems to me cold and pretentious. It is not fair to judge any man unfavorably on a single song; and it may be that this is not a good sample of his work; but it is, as a matter of fact, regarded as one of his best.

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Such is Russian song as it seems to me. And, running over the list of names of those whose genius should determine its rank, what a wonderful variety is found! Consider the delicate Orientalism of Rimsky-Korsakov, the more glowing color of Rubinstein, the atmosphere of Borodin, the deep, brooding melancholy of Chaikovsky and Vitol and Koreshchenko, the pictorial quality of Vasilenko and Liapunov, the descriptiveness of Rakhmaninov, the pure lyricism of Glinka, the intellectuality of Glazunov and Cherepnin, the Russian nationalism of Balakirev, the Jewish nationalism of Saminsky, the psychological power and sympathy with suffering of Musorgsky, the scope of Grechaninov, the balladry of Koeneman, the Gallicism and fantasy of Catoire, the Germanism and poetry of Medtner, the grace and refinement of Cui and Arensky, the classical restraint of Tanéev, the contemplative lyricism of Miaskovsky, the impish humor and individual idiom of Stravinsky, and the brutal directness of Prokofev. And there is not the slightest reason to doubt that there is more to come.

## QUARTER-TONES AND PROGRESS

By ALBERT WELLEK

EVERY art begins with a survey of its sphere, with a delimitation of its elements. Words, as the elements of Poetry, are necessarily limited in number by the nature of every human language. No one, probably, will conceive the notion that a writer in dialect who mingles his local idiom with the standard language, or some scribe who intermingles several languages, is in any way superior, as a poet, to one who maintains his language in its purity. In any painting one finds only a comparatively limited number of colors; no painter would think of applying all the colors of his palette in any one picture; and even these colors are always methodically arranged and limited in number.

What applies here, applies still more stringently to music. Not until, out of the vast number of indeterminate natural sounds, some fixed pitches have been selected and the rest discarded on principle (considered merely as variants), do we have Music. Such a selection is called a System. Among all European nations, and therefore similarly in America, the so-called Semitonic System has been established for centuries. It derives from the selectivity inherent in our ear, that recognizes seven different tones, forming the octave, which repeat themselves at various pitches; these tones constitute the familiar diatonic scales, major and minor. Of these seven tones, two show an essentially smaller difference in pitch above the tones next below than the others, the interval being approximately one-half as wide. These two intervals, therefore, are called semitones, the others being whole tones. To increase the number of tones at our command, "derivative" semitones were set between the whole tones, indicated either by a lowering of the higher whole tone in each pair, or by a raising of the lower one, by a semitone. But, as such a semitone is not precisely half a whole tone, the semitones thus obtained (e.g.,  $c\sharp$  and  $d\flat$  between  $c$  and  $d$ ) do not exactly coincide in pitch; and the difference in pitch between them represents precisely the limit ("threshold") at which the human ear can distinguish between pitches. This least distinguishable difference in pitch between two tones is called a comma. By raising or lowering

the pitch of such intermediate tones once more (or, in rare cases, twice more) we obtain still further variants of the scale-tones. By this means (and through transposition) our musical system gains a considerable variety of fixed, determinate pitches. In opposition to this there was soon felt (early in the eighteenth century) the necessity for simplification, for a positive limitation within the system. The difference between the two derivative semitones (from above and below) was adjusted by abolishing the comma; between each pair of consecutive whole tones only one intermediate semitone was recognized, and thus, by means of a general compromise (the so-called Equal Temperament), the Octave was divided into twelve tones exactly equidistant. So we now have a "tempered" system instead of a pure system of tuning. This tempered system is at present generally received; it is employed for the piano, the organ, the harp, etc., and in essentials for the orchestra also. Yet the difference between the two kinds of semitones is not, in point of fact, totally abolished; it is merely confined to the conceptive faculty, the ideation, of the hearer. For the tones of the tempered system are susceptible of various interpretation, and the ear involuntarily interprets them according to their connection with other tones; though their quantity (number of vibrations) be identical, their quality differs (psychologically). Thus, while the actual tone-material is greatly simplified, an approximation of the original diversity is psychologically retained. This material identity and ideal diversity of the tones is called the enharmonic relation. This mere statement makes it obvious that we do not, in fact, hear what is actually sounding, but what we ought or wish to hear—what it is logical to hear. And so, even on a piano out of tune, we can get the right idea of a composition, although wrong tones are actually sounding. Our ear, therefore, possesses an instinctive faculty of correction; it converts wrong tones into correct ones, albeit distressfully.—Moreover, let us not lose sight of the fact that our given material of only twelve tones is enormously diversified by the vast variety of the several instruments and by their different registers, touches, dynamics, and so forth.

Since the beginning of this century, however, scattered protests have been heard against the narrow confines of our semitonic system, with hints that an exhaustion of its combinational possibilities is only a matter of time. The technical resources of music having been enriched more than sufficiently in the course of the last century by the number, kind, and efficiency of the instruments, the next step "forward" is now viewed as consisting in a

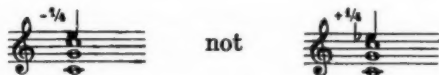


broadening of the foundations of musical art itself. Still, no one really thinks seriously (like the great physicist Helmholtz some seventy years ago) of reinstating the pure system of tuning in preference to the tempered system. Instead of this, the idea has been conceived of dividing up the octave within the tempered system into narrower and more numerous intervals. The late Ferruccio Busoni, for example, in 1906 proposed a system having quarter-tones and sixth-tones. Others took Gypsy music and certain exotic types as their pattern, and chose the quarter-tone. They would halve the twelve equal intervals of our octave, thus doubling the number of tones. For a long time this remained a merely theoretical matter, or the subject of a few insignificant experiments. Since its first emergence the idea has lost much of its attractiveness and interest. Not until quite recently has the young Czech composer Alois Hába won notable distinction in its practical realization. He applied the harmony method for the twelve (semi-) tones to his twenty-four, and invented new chromatic signs for the quarter- and three-quarter-tones. He also ventured on serious composition according to this system, at first for string-quartet and a *cappella* chorus, and had his compositions performed in Germany (Berlin, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Donaueschingen). He has also tried a successful experiment with sixth-tones. However, the resulting difficulties in intonation could not be permanently overcome. On the violin, for example, there are certain mechanical hindrances which appear to be wholly insuperable. When playing in the higher positions (say from the sixth upwards) the fingers, even in the semitonic system, are brought as close together as possible; if an attempt is made to halve the distance, the fingers get in each other's way. It is clear that the interpretation of Hába's string-quartet (played also in Prague by his Berlin players) was necessarily very imperfect, as is likewise shown by the fact that these same players, in a performance of ordinary semitone music, went slightly off the pitch. It would seem that the certainty of fingering *in general* suffers, even for the semitones, from playing the quarter-tones. Hába's endeavors won their chief success last year when the Germano-Bohemian firm of Forster, piano-makers, constructed a quarter-tone pianoforte, which was introduced to the public at the International Music Festival in Prague on June 3, 1924, by the composer himself. This instrument is a two-story piano (with two sets of strings, one over the other), one set in normal tuning, the other tuned a quarter-tone higher. There are three keyboards, arranged like the manuals of an organ; the front (lowest) and rear

(highest) keyboards control the semitonic set of strings, while the middle keyboard plays the quarter-tone set. The transition from this middle keyboard to the other two, and *vice versa*, is always possible for hands and fingers, though difficult. A professor in the Czech Conservatory at Prague, Jan Heřman, is occupied in solving the problems in piano technique arising from this novelty. On June 3, 1924, he played a piano suite by Hába and some small pieces of his own composition. On account of excessive technical difficulties, however, this virtuoso was unable to finish Hába's suite, although all these compositions of Hába's are noticeably simple in construction—they might be termed archaic. They seem like instructive, pedagogical, pieces, in which one seeks in vain for the free play of fancy or invention; they are less works of art than specimen pieces. One could not fail to recognize that the novel resources had not succeeded in bringing to light any novel emotional appeal whatsoever.

And, first of all, Hába's achievements labor under a marked psychological defect. The quarter-tone system totally suppresses the "pure" system of tuning, so that in this one point it displays itself as poorer than the earlier (semitonic) system by a priceless possibility. Pure tuning in quarter-tones is unthinkable in the nature of the case, because (as stated above) for our perceptive faculty the difference between the semitone from below and the semitone from above is indivisible. A *half-comma* represents, for any human ear, an indistinguishable difference in pitch. It follows, that the quarter-tone is lacking in enharmonic diversity when brought into the tempered system; that is to say, the quarter-tone between two semitones cannot be felt as derived either from its higher neighbor or its lower neighbor. Equal temperament is, in fact, only an abstraction from the "pure" system; and where no pure system is possible, a tempered system, as its substitute, is sheer nonsense. It follows, again, that the quarter-tone system has no logical basis; for by ignoring the pure system one does not get rid of the difficulty, and this difficulty has the most surprising practical results. We mean, that the musician's sense for absolute pitch invariably conceives the interpolated quarter-tones as variants of the next-higher semitones. The composer Hába seems either to have missed this point, or at least to have regarded it as unimportant. It is, nevertheless, a striking phenomenon. The individuality of the several tones of our system is clearly perceptible by the sense for absolute pitch, which is rightly comparable to the color-sense of the eye. For instance, if a musician hears (figuratively speaking) F as yellow and F $\sharp$  (G $\flat$ ) as green, he

hears the interpolated quarter-tone as a drab green, a *dirty green*, not at all as verging towards yellow. In spite of this, Hába calls this tone "high F," so it seems that his entire theory and method of harmony are built upon sand. For example, in consideration of the peculiar tendency of the quarter-tone to resolve upwards, a triad containing the intermediate tone between major and minor third must necessarily have a major character:



Furthermore, a triad with its major third raised by a quarter-tone can no longer be conceived as a major triad; the new tone has, rather, the significance of a suspended fourth, with a tendency to fall to the major third:



Another practical result of this state of affairs is, that in Hába's quarter-tone piano the placement of the middle keyboard in relation to the others is at fault;—the keys corresponding to the keys of the ordinary piano strike a quarter-tone above the latter instead of a quarter-tone below. The quarter-tone set of strings should not be tuned a quarter-tone higher, but a quarter-tone lower. The fact that the tendency of quarter-tones is upwards, rather than the reverse, is probably due to the circumstance that the earlier-noted corrective faculty of our ear must, in most cases, operate in an upward direction, because almost every deviation from pitch is caused by relaxation of tension, with consequent lowering of pitch. Our ear strives to restore the tension, to raise the pitch—this is the rule. Now, the quarter-tone has no life of its own, as proved by the foregoing; it is dependent, and must so remain. Consequently, Hába's system must naturally appear illogical, heterogeneous, incoherent, for the semitones in it might well be interpreted enharmonically, whereas the quarter-tones can not, so that the latter wholly debar the former. There are, in this system, tones with a life of their own, but also just as many without, and these latter vitiate the entire system. This is in line with the surprisingly slight effect of the novel system, calculated to disillusion even the skeptical. True, the effect is not "gray,"

or "colorless," as the composer assumes of the first impression, but vague, characterless, inexpressive. All in all, it adds an unaccustomed tang, dims the tone-color, and heightens the dragging effect of the chromatics. Once the charm of novelty is worn off, the inferiority of the new system as contrasted with the old must be clear to all. One is obliged to sacrifice much in order to gain little. Indeed, the quarter-tone, and still finer gradations, are by no means unknown in our semitonic system, but are welcome guests; they are the nuances, the shades of tone, employed by singers, violinists and other performing artists in conformity with the peculiarities of their instruments and their own musical sensibility, at first unconsciously and then as a matter of habit, without directions from the composer. It would be equally difficult and useless to prescribe such delicate nuances and transitions; for, owing to shortcomings in our instruments and in their technique, these nuances arise unbidden, changeable, and indeterminate. Contrasted with them, the quarter-tone seems inflexible and pedantic; it hinders the free play of the nuances without rising to an equality with the semitones and living its own life.

In this entire experiment, therefore, we recognize a fundamental æsthetic misconception. Not without reason did Music pursue the path from More to Less, and choose the system of equal temperament rather than that of pure tuning; not without reason did she retain the capability of returning at will to the pure system and refreshing herself at the fount. From 12 to 24 is not an advance, but an aberration, a loss. For what is the diversity of the quarter-tones in comparison with the pure semitonic system? It is nothing more than a loosening and diffusion of the *voluntary* limitation of Music—hence, a compromise, a contradiction. After all, strength resides in limitation, not in multiplication, which is found everywhere. But for Hába and his fellowship, even though they believe that they have, in very truth, fructified music, it is not a question of More, but of Differentiation. And yet, this striving after originality rests, as proved by the outcome, on one more fundamental misconception. In art the idea, the concept, is the vital matter, and it is apart from and independent of the formal means. The musician is no more dependent on the tones than the sculptor on the marble. And just as one sees, in a piece of sculpture, not the marble but the idea, one hears in a composition not the pitches, but the conception. No art is simply a permutation or combination of its basic elements. Therefore, the conceptive fancy alone can reform art, not speculative experimenting with technical possibilities; not scientific calculation, but creative genius. If an

idea be new, it will invest even the old resources with new meaning and new modes of association;—just as language, moulded by the creative spirit of the poet, expands in natural growth, without his having first to invent some new and unheard-of twist of syntax. Neither is there any musical thought that can be expressed in the quarter-tone system exclusively, and not in any other way. While it may first occur to one in quarter-tones, it might just as well emerge in third-tones, or sixth-tones, or eighth-tones—or (and most probably) within the semitonic system. Where shall we draw the line?—and where, after all, is the difference? He is the true artist, who can mould the given material at will; should we not have our doubts concerning a poet who claimed to have ideas not susceptible of expression in any known tongue? Such a spectacle has of late been presented for our derision by the Dadaists.

True talent, in fact, recognizes the value of limitation and learns to love it. Such talent sees no hindrance in limitation, but rather that voluntary dependence that Goethe, in his maturity, called the most pleasurable of all conditions. It is, at all events, the sole condition wherefrom the Beautiful can arise.

The speech of the quarter-tone enthusiasts, however, is not that of artists, but of dilettanti—of those who, lacking inward capacity for individual expression, seek forcibly to enlist an external agency. Hereby, of course, the floodgates of dilettantism are thrown wide, for in this newly discovered region all who list can wander at will; whatever they do will be “new”—at first. But not everything that is “new” is good, or even original. And all the quarter-tones in the world will not raise a commonplace conception to significance.

Thus the whole question is reduced to a pure technicality, of much the same importance as the question whether Wagner tubas or xylophones are admissible in the orchestra. And after all!—it depends on the given case; but it has nothing to do with a reform or a renovation of Art. Either of these can be brought about by intuition alone. We do not, however, wish to rob Herr Hába of the credit due for a valuable psychological experiment!

*(Translated by Theodore Baker.)*

# NIETZSCHE AND HIS MUSIC

By HANSELL BAUGH

FOR some reason, none of Nietzsche's many biographers has ever seen fit to lay great emphasis on the extent to which their common subject's "Life" was concerned, as much as with anything else, with the obstacles against which a frustrated musician had to strike his head. Because of their persistent violence, his musical cravings and revulsions were a more fiery element in the life of the man than his changing philosophical positions—less fiery only than his stellar friendships. Through the whole of this life, a thread runs pathetically; broken for long stretches; but always there: this "thread" it is agreeable to think of tropologically as the remnant of a strong musical impulse and of an unmeasured musical talent in a man who was a philologist instead; a professor, a philosopher, an alchemist of moral values, and finally in the terrible end a lunatic.

## I

The beginnings of Nietzsche's musical "education," according to his sister, were made partly in the choir loft of the Lutheran church at Röcken of which his father was pastor, but mainly at the house of a neighbor: Fritz would sometimes go home with his little friend Gustav Krug, and sit listening to Gustav's father as he played on his grand piano, never anything less, it seems, than Beethoven, Mozart and Haydn. Perhaps Fritz, on returning home, would go to the piano and awkwardly finger out melodic fragments from the sonatas heard at Herr Krug's: certainly, he was making up tunes of his own as early as his tenth year. Nietzsche's own account of these beginnings, written at the advanced age of 19, says vaguely that it was through an "accidental inspiration" that he began at the age of nine "to take a passionate interest in music, and started composing as well almost immediately, if one may call the efforts of an excited child to transfer chords and sequences of tones to paper and to sing Biblical texts with a fanciful piano accompaniment 'composing.'"

It was not until he was twelve that he applied himself with high ambitiousness to composing—without the quotation-marks. At that time he set himself to the notation of a fantasia for piano,



to which he gave the title "Moonlight on the Pussta"—a piece that he seems to have considered of some importance; for he later revised it, with improving and "finishing" touches. A reproduction of this piece appears in the three-volume German edition of Frau Förster-Nietzsche's biography. It is interesting to notice that the programmatic idea embodied in the title of this earliest of Nietzsche's compositions persisted throughout his life, in his own musical works and in his criticisms of others. Nietzsche was never the "absolutist"—not even in music.

This descriptive piece marks the beginning of a long period of brisk activity in musical matters, for the benefit of a small society—The Germania, they named it—which he formed with two young friends, Wilhelm Pinder and Gustav Krug. Both the latter remained in Naumburg, while Nietzsche was away during the greater part of the year attending school in Pforta; but this mere physical distance could not affect the exercises of this society for the "development of the spirit." The young "Germanians" sent each other, on schedule, compositions and poems, lectures and discourses: among the articles contributed by the Pforta contingent were Overtures, choruses, "Servia" (a symphonic poem), pieces of music called "The Annunciation with fugue" and "Pain is the Fundamental Feature of Nature."

Soon after the Germania society was organized, the young musicians subscribed to *Die Zeitschrift für Musik*, the only musical journal of the time which had come out in the open *pro Wagner*. The record of disturbances they found in its pages is surely the reason for the young seventeen year olds' purchase of a piano score of *Tristan und Isolde* in the Hans von Bülow reduction. During the autumn vacation of 1862, Nietzsche and young Krug would spend whole days at the piano, playing this score in the noisy and dramatic fashion of young pianists from beginning to end. Frau Förster-Nietzsche has written her amusing recollections of this stormy period in the Nietzsche household, which had to put up with all these operatic sessions, since Herr Krug could abide only the classics.

The year 1863 was a busy one for the young "composer." His last at Pforta, it was consequently filled with routine study of the sort most irritating to him: especially in mathematics, always hated by Nietzsche—a study in which his lack of proficiency almost caused him to lose his certificate from the college. This constant drudgery could not interfere with his proliferation of literary and musical compositions for the Germania symposia. It seems, on the contrary, to have pushed him, through disgust

with laborious scholasticism, to the climax of such small composer's "career" as he ever had: for at about this time he announced to his dismayed mother that he had definitely decided to become a musician, that the "thought of the university bored him," as M. Daniel Halévy says in his lively account that varies at so many points from the "official" biography. This was the impulsive decision that Nietzsche made and then cast aside almost immediately. During this last year at Pforta, he had a habit of going to the college music-room every evening to sit at the piano, simply improvising. Baron von Gersdorff, also a student, would often be there to listen to these impromptus, of which he wrote this perhaps superlative description: "I should have no difficulty in believing that even Beethoven did not play extempore in a more moving manner." How constantly Nietzsche was occupied with composition is evident in the long list of "musical efforts in the year 1863" scratched down in "The Book of Contemplations," one of his note-books of the time: it includes many songs, a piece for violin and piano, the Allegro of a sonata to be played as a duet—"which I forgot, also the Adagio of this piece, which I did not forget." The intensity with which his mind hung over music is best shown in another youthful statement of Nietzsche's own: "When for any length of time I am allowed to think of what I choose, I seek words for a melody I possess, and a melody for words I possess, but the two together will not harmonize, despite the fact that they both come from one soul. But that is my fate!"

## II

For the German gentleman, after he leaves college, the inevitable next thing in life is the University. And so, shortly after his twentieth birthday, Nietzsche left his mother's house in Naumburg to go to Bonn and begin working for his doctor's degree. This apparently sudden turn in the opposite direction from his earlier decision upon music as a career was neither a drastic change toward scholasticism nor a renunciation of music. It was merely a recognition of the expedient thing, a calm revising of his desire to tend his natural musical impulse into an acquiescence in the force of custom: the acquirement of learning through the established system of institutions was by now his most settled habit. His continued concern with music was still sufficiently marked to earn for him among his student friends at Bonn the nickname "Ritter Gluck."

Among the starred items of the section on Bonn in European guide-books is the grave of Robert Schumann. At the time of Nietzsche's stay in that city (it may or may not be a thing of the past) there was a great deal of local enthusiasm and adulation over Schumann's music, with frequent performances. At Christmas of the year in Bonn, Nietzsche sent home to his mother and sister "eight charming musical settings"<sup>1</sup> of poems by Chamisso and Petöfi, "all stamped with the character of Schumann's music," says Frau Lisbeth: "The Tempest," by Chamisso, was to be sung, in orthodox Schumann style, "seriously, mournfully, and with determination." Very appropriately, this shipment was crossed by his aunt Rosalie's gift of the score of *Manfred*. (Nietzsche's own *Manfred-Meditation* for piano was not composed until some years later, and its title referred to Byron's *Manfred*, according to Nietzsche, rather than Schumann's.)

At the end of this first year, Nietzsche changed to the university at Leipzig—following one of his professors, Herr F. W. Ritschl, the philologist, the "Savior of Plautus," whose historic quarrel with Otto Jahn had resulted in his withdrawal from Bonn. If there is to be a blame attached to any particular influence against a musical career for the young Nietzsche, it must be to that of Ritschl, who saw that his pupil was a man of "great gifts" and so urged him to a deep philological devotion, encouraged him to write essays on the sources of Diogenes Laertius, imposed upon him the awful task of indexing the *Rheinisches Museum* after twenty-four years of unindexed publication. By this remarkable old man, for whom he felt so high an admiration, Nietzsche was thus helped to "specialize" in some one branch of learning throughout his University years; to devote all of his time to semantics and almost none of his energy to composition or even to that easier "detrimental habit of impromptu playing." Under Ritschl's guidance he read Æschylus and Aristophanes, in part; "*in honorem Ritscheli*" he wrote treatises on Democritus, on Diogenes Laertius, on Suidas; *in imitationem Ritscheli* he lectured to the University's Philological society on the Saturæ of Varro and their lost archetypes, the Saturæ of Menippus, the Gadarene cynic. But when he wrote in a letter, about Easter

<sup>1</sup>N.B.—These and eight other songs appeared in 1924 as volume one in the series of Nietzsche's Musical Works proposed to be published by Kistner & Siegel, of Leipzig. The gaps in the chronology are significant: only three songs were composed after this group of eight written in 1864 at Bonn. The first was the very interesting *Junge Fischerin* in "futuristic style," as the young Nietzsche foresaw the style of the future; the second, a short fragment on a Byron poem: these two were composed in 1865. The last also is a fragment, dated 1882; a sketch for the first stanza of the "Hymn to Life," Nietzsche's last song.

1866: "Three things are my consolations—my Schopenhauer, Schumann's music and lastly solitary walks," he confessed his unwillingness to follow Ritschl to the world's ends. He planned to continue for two more years in this pursuit of a Doctor's degree, humbly envisaging at the end a lapse into the condition of a *privatdozent*. This solution for the difficulties of every student's future he proposed earnestly to his friend Erwin Rohde, with whom he was planning to take a flying trip to Paris after the drudgery of graduation, or "habilitation," was past. In October 1868 he wrote to Rohde: "I ought to tell you that until Easter I intend to go through all the annoyances of habilitation and at the same time to take my doctor's degree . . . but I think it only right that when I have thrown the fetters from my hands I should do some traveling about the world for the last time as a private person! O dear friend, my feelings will be those of a bridegroom, joy and vexation mixed. . . ."

These extra-philological yearnings make it plain enough that there were influences working against Ritschl's own. Chief among these, aside from the warm personal relations with friends and family, was Schopenhauer, the spiritual father by divine accident. And it was at about this time also that Nietzsche's childhood admiration for Wagner's music began again to take on liveliness. After an evening at a concert where the *Tristan* prelude and the *Meistersinger* overture were played, he wrote to Rohde: "I can not get myself to regard this music coldly and critically: every tissue and every nerve vibrates in me. For a long time I have not had such a feeling of enduring rapture."

The end of this year and the beginning of 1869, with Nietzsche twenty-four years old, made perhaps the most eventful period of the young man's life. Certainly it began the culmination of his musical experience; for in November, one month after writing the foregoing rhapsodic account of the Wagner concert, he met the great god Richard. On the heels of this grand windfall, with its cordial invitation to the young man to visit the Wagners' villa Tribschen, Ritschl recommended Nietzsche, although he had not yet received his degree, for the vacant post of Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Basle, with the endorsement: "He will always be able to do anything he wants to do." Nietzsche was given the appointment.

He was not unconscious of the death-blow this dealt to his desires for freedom, and his musical aspirations. "A great trick has been played on me," he wrote to Rohde, "and our plans for Paris have been blown into thin air. With them, too, have gone

my fairest hopes. . . . Down there how much alone I shall be—without a friend whose thought resounds to mine like beautiful thirds, minor or major!" And a little later, to the same correspondent: "I have not told you anything about the first production of *Meistersinger* in Dresden, this great artistic orgy which the winter has brought me. God knows, I must have a great deal of the musician about me, for during the whole of that time I was deeply conscious of being suddenly at home, and in my element, and regarded my other occupations as a distant mist from which I had been delivered. . . . At the present moment I am living a very distracted life—seeking pleasure in a desperate Carnival before the Ash-Wednesday of my calling of Philistinism. I feel it deeply."

On the way to the slaughter, the lamb stopped off at Karlsruhe to hear a performance of *Meistersinger*. One month after the academic shearing, he paid his first visit to Wagner and Cosima at Tribschen.

### III

"When I remember how I was led from art to philosophy, from philosophy to science, and then to this much narrower domain (philology), it almost seems to be an act of deliberate renunciation." This was Nietzsche's confession in 1869, shortly after he had taken up his duties at Basle. His first book, "The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music," published in the last days of 1871, shows how few of these interests he renounced during his first and second professorial years. In one of the crucial sentences of the book, with the vocabulary of the current German idealistic philosophers, he characterized the emotional aspect of music in a literary comparison that makes his partiality clear: "Language, as the organ and symbol of phenomena, can not at all disclose the innermost essence of music; language can only be in superficial contact with music when it attempts to imitate music; while the profoundest significance of the latter can not be brought one step nearer to us by all the eloquence of lyric poetry."

This remarkable and extremely youthful book was familiarly known as "The Centaurs" among Nietzsche's intimates, because of one of the sayings of its author: "Science, Art and Philosophy are now growing so closely side by side in me that one day I shall certainly bring forth centaurs." At least, as he declared to Rohde, he had very thoroughly given philology the go-by—in fact, for the next five years Nietzsche gave almost everything the go-by except Richard Wagner. While he continued to hold his post at

Basle, the really important things were those days at Tribschen described tenderly in "Ecce Homo": ". . . days of confidence, of gaiety, of sublime flashes—days of *profound* perceptions." The obscure young professor still in his middle twenties was thrilled to receive in his mail such intimate flatteries from the great Wagner as this: "You can do much for me: you can take on your shoulders a full half of the task assigned to me by fate. And by so doing you will perhaps achieve the whole of your own destiny." With an unselfishness of which Wagner would never have been capable, Nietzsche undertook to "achieve his own destiny" by devoting himself entirely to Wagner, and he began by becoming a sort of propagandist-in-chief for the coming festival at Bayreuth. The lasting memorial to this period is the essay "Richard Wagner at Bayreuth" in "Thoughts out of Season," which was written at a time when Nietzsche's eyesight was so disordered that the essay had to be turned over to one of his university pupils (Peter Gast) to be copied out in legible form for the publisher. The tragic sequel is too familiar to require further retailment. In spite of his growing doubt of the complete nobility and even the sanity of Wagner's aims, Nietzsche remained the loyal disciple, submerged in the movement, suffering the great demands on his time and energy that Wagner made in his sublime unconscious way—until the great day at Bayreuth in August 1876 that broke the camel's burdened back.

Nietzsche's Wagnerian criticism is perhaps the most incoherent part of his writings. His attitude after the break is much too complex and elusive to be nailed down in a single sentence, but he wrote once in brutal summary: "My objections to Wagner's music are physiological. Why, therefore, should I clothe them in æsthetic formulæ? Æsthetics is nothing more than applied physiology anyway." This passage is full of meaning for the modern musician who listens to the music of his day with more than his ears, but it falls rather short of disposing of Wagner. A much clearer statement is in the belated preface to "Human, all-too-Human," written in 1886, part of which serves as a retrospect of the ten years of his secession from the Wagner movement: "Richard Wagner was in reality only a decayed and despairing romantic on his knees before the Christian cross . . . I was ill, or rather more than ill—weary: weary from disgust at the effeminacy and undisciplined rhapsody of this romanticism, at the whole tissue of idealistic lies and softening of conscience . . . I began by entirely forbidding myself all romantic music, that ambiguous, pompous, stifling art which robs the mind of its sternness and its



joyousness and provides a fertile soil for every kind of vague yearning and spongy sensuality. *Cave musicam* is even to-day my advice to all who are enough of men to cling to purity in matters of the intellect." Nietzsche's objections were more than physiological: they were philosophical, personal, ethical: but they were not musical. He said as much himself in notes written late in 1888 for "Ecce Homo": "A psychologist might say that what I heard in my younger years in Wagnerian music had nothing to do with Wagner; that when I described Wagner's music I described what I had heard." But Nietzsche was not deaf, in spite of his claim not to have heard what he was listening to: more than a year before his *Cave musicam* he had heard the prelude to *Parsifal* for the first time, in a concert version, and had written at once to a friend: "I do not seek to know whether this art can or should serve some end. I ask myself, has Wagner ever done better? And I find this: the most exact conscience and psychological precision in the manner of expressing and communicating emotion; a sentiment, a musical experience of a soul that is extraordinary and sublime. Equal beauties one finds in Dante and nowhere else." Isolated paragraphs of this sort in the books of his later years—"Ecce Homo" in particular—show Nietzsche's sensitiveness to the qualities that remain admirable even now in Wagner's music. This year of grace is not a time for a defense of Wagner, whose operas draw crowds to the Metropolitan several nights each week; neither is it a time to agree with the young French musicians who refuse to listen to Wagner's music and will grant him only a literary homage. Nietzsche knew as well as they do that Wagner is one of the profound musical geniuses of the centuries; but on the whole his judgments on Wagner and his music do not hang together any better than his emotions did: for the most part he wrote of his revered contemporary without seeming to be at all aware that the Wagnerian music drama is a hybrid of literary ideas (sometimes called a philosophy) and music.

After his Wagnerian "illness," Nietzsche remained wary of all music for many years, forbidding himself to read music or play the piano at all. For a substitute digital exercise, he planned to buy a typewriter, and so lessen the troubles of his copyist, Peter Gast. It was through his continued friendship with this young man, who had been one of his pupils at Basle, that Nietzsche was finally enabled to bridge the gap he had tried to place between himself and the most loved and least trusted of the arts. Gast also was a musician: he composed an opera that Nietzsche afterwards said was "as balm to his soul." The Wagnerian

convalescent heard Bizet's *Carmen*; fired by admiration of this "frank disciple of Berlioz," he was seized with a desire to "mediterraneanize" music; pleased by the elemental emotions of Mérimée's story, he praised in implied Attic comparisons the last lines of the opera libretto as he had praised the finale of *Tristan* years before in "The Birth of Tragedy"—without realizing that the notes sung by Don José (his "terrible formula") to the final words "*ma Carmen adorée*" are identical with the melody in the final orchestral rendering of Isolde's transfiguration theme: "*In des Welt Athems wehendem All.*"

In 1882, after eight years of literary productivity (in which "Human, all-too-Human," "Dawn of Day," "Joyful Wisdom," had been written) and of musical silence, he composed again. One of his rare, always abortive love affairs had borne fruit in the form of a Hymn "To Life." This text, written by the famous Fräulein Lou von Salomé, he set to music for chorus and orchestra. As usual, the ordeal of composing exhausted him. He had neuralgia, "crises of doubt, barrenness and satiety" (Halévy). He had to take to his bed, but sent short notes to her: "In bed, terrible attack. *I scorn life.*" The Hymn was published five years later, and he wrote of it to Georg Brandes at that time: "It is intended to represent my music to posterity and one day to be sung 'in my memory,' assuming there is enough left of me for that." Mottl, the conductor of the Bayreuth festivals, read the score and offered to give a performance of it at Karlsruhe. A copy sent to Brahms brought this response: "Johannes Brahms begs to present his sincerest thanks to you for what you have sent him, as also for the honor he esteems it to be, and the great stimulus he derived from it. With his most respectful compliments." This reception was indeed encouraging, but pathetic in relation to a correspondence Nietzsche had carried on sixteen years earlier with Hans von Bülow about the recently composed "Manfred-Meditation." Nietzsche had sent a copy of this fantasia for piano solo to him for criticism. Bülow tried to be polite to the young author of "The Birth of Tragedy," but he felt compelled to denounce the composition as something comparable "only to a crime in the moral world. . . . A reeling imagination reveling in the memory of Wagnerian chords is not a fit basis for creative work." Nietzsche was quite crushed by this letter, and answered humbly that he would never do it again. It will be interesting to see this music that was so disturbing to Bülow when it is published by the Leipzig firm that is now bringing out all of Nietzsche's musical works.

As for the "Hymn to Life," it is in very simple song-form in two stanzas, with harmonic progressions and rhythm and phrasing that are interesting for little more than their clear revelations of Nietzsche's musical admirations: Hymnus, the church, where (through an "accidental inspiration") he first became interested in music; the bold march rhythm, *mit heroischem Ausdruck*, relates back to Schumann's grave at Bonn; the chords just preceding the close are the last indication of Nietzsche's thorough-going and incurable Wagnerism. "*Den habe ich sehr geliebt*," said Nietzsche once years afterward on his invalid's couch.

During the last years before that catastrophe, the years in which "Zarathustra," "Beyond Good and Evil," "The Genealogy of Morals," and notes for "The Will to Power" were being written down, in Nice, in the Engadine, then in Turin, Nietzsche took a profound pleasure in Gast's opera *The Lion of St. Mark*, which never achieved the projected Dresden performance referred to in correspondence between the two friends. About Nietzsche's own last music there is some dispute: he is supposed to have been working on a composition up to the end, and M. Halévy says it was a Hymn to Solitude that has not been found; but as early as 1877 Nietzsche had mentioned a song by this name in a letter to Erwin Rohde. It is, however, a matter only of historical importance, since the musical value of Nietzsche's obtainable songs is so slight. A more moving testimony may be found in his correspondence of the year 1888, first in a letter to Peter Gast: "Music, these days, gives me sensations which I had never known. It frees me, it lets me recover from the intoxication of myself: I seem to consider myself from a great height, to feel myself from a great height. Thus it renders me stronger, and regularly after an evening's music (I have heard *Carmen* four times) I have a morning full of energetic perceptions and lucky discoveries. It is as though I had bathed in a *more natural* element. . . . Without music life is merely a mistake, a weariness, an exile"—and a few months later a note in similar vein to Georg Brandes: "I am afraid that I am too much of a musician not to be a romanticist. Life for me without music would be a mistake."

At the beginning of the following year, Professor Overbeck hastened to Turin in great anxiety over certain brief messages that he and others had received from Nietzsche. One account of their meeting relates that Professor Overbeck found the author of the newly completed "Case of Wagner," "The Antichrist," and "Ecce Homo," raving, seated at the piano, ploughing up and down the keyboard with his elbow.

# HUCBALD, SCHOENBERG AND OTHERS ON PARALLEL OCTAVES AND FIFTHS

By MAUD G. SEWALL

ONE might as well begin with Hucbald as anywhere. A. W. Ambros in his highly engaging little treatise *Zur Lehre vom Quintenverbot* calls him

The Adam who first ate of the tree of knowledge upon which the Fifths grew as forbidden fruit;—who ate and, in order to learn to distinguish good from evil, provisionally did the evil.

And Ambros had the true historian's instinct. It is not important that the passages from the *Musica Enchiriadis* upon which Ambros bases this praise, or this blame, do not make Hucbald out as the first to have experimented with "organizing" in fourths and fifths, nor even that modern research questions whether Hucbald wrote the book at all. The way to make history live is to allow some outstanding figure of his time to gather to himself all the tentative gropings, failures and successes of a host of unremembered contemporaries, and so, by assuming a mythical or heroic dignity, to survive through the ages and carry his own age down to us. Hucbald has in some way performed that service for us, and he stands personified in the following doctrine, whether or not he wrote it:

Organum is also called Diaphony because it does not consist in uniform [i. e., unisonal] singing, but in the harmonious blending of sounds that differ. . . . Although the name is common to all symphonies [in the literal sense of sounding-together], the fifth and the fourth have nevertheless got hold of it.

## Ex. 1

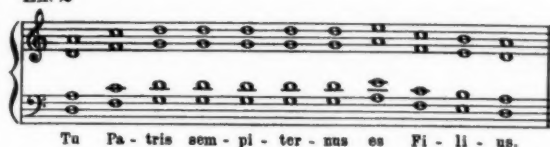
(a) in o - pe - ri - bus su - is. (b) Tu Pa - tris sem - pi - ter - nus es Fi - li - us.

But you may do even better, for the author continues:

Not only may a simple voice be united to a simple, but either the simple organum may respond to a double or a double to the simple, or

if you double both in the octave you shall hear the voices of this sort of relation resound sweetly in reciprocation.

Ex. 2



And the Hucbald Organum is before us in its perfection.

But perfection appertains to nothing human, and it should not be surprising that the system, in its somewhat mechanical type of perfection, rides to a fall in the course of the very book that sets it up. When that crucial point in the scale is reached where the perfect parallel must be abandoned, or the mode altered in one or the other of the parts, or the tritone encountered, Hucbald,—or whoever he was,—is forced into what we know as oblique motion, or even into contrary motion, and the day of true polyphony begins to dawn.

However, this was not because the fifths or fourths were found unpleasant in themselves. With our century-old traditions it is easy to take the wrong point of view. May not Ambros himself be guilty of this error? In the very act of setting the historical documents before us, he throws up his hands in horrified disbelief, solely because his æsthetic judgment does not coincide with Hucbald's:

*Doch nein!* These fifths can surely never have been sung! For great as may have been the veneration for the theorist and his organum, the human ear must have revolted against the piercing shriek (*das einschneidende Geheul*) of bare fifths ascending or descending in parallel motion; decidedly the most horror-exciting thing that man can produce from musical tones.

He thinks that one or two experiments in the quiet of the cloister must have been enough to set at work the beginnings, at least, of the overthrow of the system. Yet he finds Guido of Arezzo, a hundred years later, not a whit further advanced, unless that he held fourths in greater affection than fifths—(which does not alter the case essentially)—and can only discover a definite end to the unthinkable practice some four hundred years after Hucbald, through Jean de Muris:

When and where this ancient Organum first came into disrepute we do not know. This birth of the ancient night, this musical Python, may long have prevailed before finding in the Fourteenth Century his

Phœbus Apollo in the form of a Sorbonne doctor who gave him his final death blow: Jean de Muris, who wrote:—*Sciendum est etiam quod. . . debemus binas consonantias perfectas seriatim ascendendo vel descendendo prout possumus evitare* (We ought to avoid two perfect consonants ascending or descending in consecutive conjunction, so far as possible); and there was gradually light upon the musical domain.

But this judging from present-day æsthetic standards is an uncertain business. One who was out to make trouble might maintain, as we shall see later, that parallel fifths are by no means always horror-exciting, even to Twentieth-Century ears, and who will vouch for ears of the Tenth Century? We know that they accepted the fifth long before the third, and were satisfied that a piece should close with a bare fifth. The third, which we should find so much more agreeable, would not have been tolerable as a point of repose.

Insofar as the so-called primitive peoples of our times are to be regarded as transmitters of the thought and practice of earlier ages, we should turn to them for proof or disproof of the perfect parallels. Unfortunately for our purpose their music is almost exclusively monophonic. Yet certain passages from a highly enlightening essay by Willy Pastor, of Berlin, entitled *The Music of Primitive Peoples and the Beginnings of European Music*,<sup>1</sup> have a direct bearing upon our subject. Pastor tells us that the Berlin *Phonogramarchiv* contains "unequivocal examples of songs of primitive peoples which were sung in strict fifth intervals." He finds parallels for this in unsophisticated European communities:

Leopold Mozart heard street singers in Italy sing their little ditties in perfect fifths,

and speaks of "our village musicians" (German) as singing in fifths "without knowing they had done it, or wishing to do it," as though it were a matter of common observation. And he arrives at a most significant and far-reaching conclusion when he adds:

Thus we may conceive of the parallel fifths and octaves of primitive peoples as nothing more than a more fully orchestrated unison.

But Pastor cites not only parallel fifths in the phonograph records, but parallel seconds as well: two-voiced songs of the Admiralty Islanders, moving in seconds and usually closing in that interval. Pastor calls attention to a corresponding use of seconds in the ancient Ambrosian funeral litanies, and asks whether the use of these parallel fifths and seconds in the music of primitive

<sup>1</sup>See *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institute*, 1912, in which the essay appears in English translation.



peoples on the one hand and in Hucbald and the Ambrosian chant on the other is to be pointed to

as a budding complexity of tones, or must we not rather conceive it as a deterioration, as the unmeaning curtailment of a harmony of tones, rich in a sense, which is practiced outside the circle of influence of primitive peoples, as of the church, by whom it was only borrowed and mis-used? . . . I will not anticipate, but must indeed bring out here the fact that in the case of the church only the second supposition, that of a deterioration, is tenable, and it is not otherwise in the case of primitive peoples. . . . Just as hopelessly as with their dull music perception the borrowed instruments of finer quality were sacrificed in a gradual deterioration,<sup>1</sup> just so irretrievably were sacrificed the elements of harmony. . . . Earlier it was supposed (with primitive peoples) that at first the larger intervals (octaves, fifths, fourths especially) received attention, and that between these wide intervals smaller and smaller ones were gradually interpolated. This hypothesis is ethnologically untenable. . . . The Mincopie in the Andamans may, according to present information, stand as the most perfect in the primitive art of producing music. All their melodies move around one tone from which they vary, to our ear, only half a tone upward and half a tone downward. The oldest Shamanic music can have known at first only indefinite melodies. It was a gliding of the voice. For the magician who exorcises the storm or the hunter who imitates the cry of the beast the eighth-tones of the Andamans constitute a melody in steps."

Is not Pastor here describing a melodic or successive, rather than an harmonic or simultaneous, refinement? An Andaman may split hairs to an eighth-tone, but does it follow that a second Andaman who might wish to join with him at some different pitch would hit upon an interval only an eighth-tone higher or lower, or an eighth-tone off the octave or fifth? There should be a relation between the two refinements, melodic and harmonic, to be sure. One is tempted to ask whether it be not negative and whether certain non-European races have not carried homophonic refinement further than we, or retained it longer, because they have practically no polyphony, and whether we have not curtailed an earlier melodic refinement for the sake of our polyphonic development. Our tempered scale would seem to point that way. Yet a sensibility to minute gradations horizontally should imply a like sensibility perpendicularly. String quartets from Vienna employing quarter-tones, like a recent quintet from Cleveland, Ohio, may be taken as indications that we are moving in the direction of finer differentiations, both melodic and harmonic.

<sup>1</sup>Pastor has just referred to the fact that stringed instruments carried into Africa have fallen into degraded use as instruments of percussion.

But all this leads too far afield. Where Pastor treats definitely of the harmonic intervals he takes, after all, the commonly accepted view:

It is rather an idle question as to which intervals were first clearly grasped as such: which, to employ a comparison of Stumpf's, first combined themselves into a firm skeleton, while the others still remained the weak parts of the musical body. It is possible that in the sound of the so naturally produced octaves, fifths and fourths the knowledge of intervals first dawned. Not in these fixed and therefore inexpressive intervals . . . could music have become an art in the highest sense, but through the active intervals by which the major and minor scales change, especially the thirds and sixths. . . . A melody in major or even in minor (parallel) thirds is precisely as dull and intolerable as a similar one in pure fifths or fourths. The varying light and shade in constant changes from the major to the minor produce the intrinsic life. With the introduction to such a contrast music became a really plastic three-dimensioned art.

This paragraph offers an admirably satisfactory reason for the prohibition of the perfect parallels, and yet it does not entirely eliminate Hucbald's organum as a possible stepping-stone towards a "really plastic art." Pastor himself says:

We have seen that octaves have obtained a certain value of expression in our music. The same is true with fifths and fourths, which for chaotic and terrifying parts are almost a kind of musical hieroglyphic:—for example, the introduction to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which the open fifth dominates, and the entrance of the marble statue in "Don Giovanni." The fourths and fifths have such a value of expression only in very rich and dense harmony. In themselves both intervals are just as neutral and inexpressive as the octave. It is quite intelligible that in part-songs higher or lower voices were placed in the fifth or fourth, and that in the alterations both voices occasionally hit upon these intervals (?). Such a combined tone would, however, not be perceived as expressive, but only as a more clearly accented unison.

The translation, on which unfortunately I have to rely, leaves something to be desired as to clarity, in the next to the last sentence, but seems to point to a parallel motion. But for Hucbald Pastor has slight esteem:

In our textbooks of harmony the first rule is a strong prohibition of parallel fifths and fourths. The prohibition is based not on cold theory but on the distinct recognition of the fact that the sound of such parallels is extremely disagreeable. One must be very obtuse musically not to perceive this. If Hucbald enthuses over the "lovely harmony which arises from such a combination of tones" he may have been a great scholar but he was certainly an extremely bad musician, and we must ask ourselves whether the good monk did not involve his church in a fundamental misunderstanding by taking up the polyphonic practises

outside the church, of which, from the schooling he had received from Boethius, he had grasped only the merest rudiments.

And Pastor goes on to quote a well known but somewhat uncertainly understood passage from Scotus Erigena's *De Divisione Naturae*,—thirty years older than Hucbald's book,—to show that a much richer polyphony than Hucbald's was known and practised long before his day—

that long before the church the people knew the two-part theme, and that the ecclesiastical recognition of the musical form did not promote it but, on the contrary, checked it.

The burden of Pastor's essay throughout is "that the old Christian Psalmody approaches the primitive, horizontal music, and that it is entirely foreign to the characteristic European feeling"; whereas "all polyphonic music is north-European and secular, or at least heathen, in origin."

We are not greatly concerned in the part which Hucbald and the church may have played in the matter, but have rather to ask whether it is easier to believe that an artistically varied use of intervals in the leading of two voice-parts sprang, Athena-like, fully armed from the head of some musical Zeus, than that the beginnings were in some such cautious paralleling as Hucbald describes. There is a third alternative,—that the so-called oblique motion came first of all. Pastor suggests this in the following passage:

A harmonic perception that can clearly distinguish between large and small intervals is conceivable only when the so-called principle of tonality has long been established; that is to say, when the ear has become accustomed to place every single tone of the melody in relation with a controlling fundamental tone from which the theme proceeds and to which it returns. There has been much controversy as to how the development of the sense of tone is to be regarded. It is agreed that the fundamental tone which we to-day employ as a measure for a long time accompanied the melody audibly. The bagpipe with its drone serves as the classical instrument which offers this *pons asinorum* to the unpractised ear.

The acceptance of this as a true account of the beginnings enables one, perhaps, to do away with the Hucbald Organum, especially since historians are throwing doubt on the old traditions which limited Greek music to a unison, or a magadizing in the octave. This magadizing, it was thought, would lead naturally to the organizing in fifths and fourths. Ancient Greek sources indicate an accompaniment of the voice by an instrument in the unison, it is true, but even in the archaic period, in the times of

Terpander and Olympos, are to be found examples (isolated, not in parallel motion) of the second, the major sixth, the fourth and the fifth, if Westphal, among others, is to be trusted.<sup>1</sup> Only two considerations can keep us from throwing Hucbald over: that his testimony, as a contemporary, as to the feeling and practice of his day is worth infinitely more than our surmises as to what that feeling and practice ought to have been; and, secondly, that the beginnings of part-singing may have been something very different from part-singing itself. A man cannot aim at a mark which he does not see, although he may bring down valuable quarry by a chance shot. The aim at first,—in the generally accepted view,—was not polyphony as we now conceive it, but merely some method whereby voices of different pitch might sing along together. This aim was attained in the strict organum, which is nothing but Pastor's "more fully orchestrated unison," and there the matter might have rested but for the influence of the Modes, which forced a break in the perfect, parallel motion, and incidentally brought about the conception of polyphony proper.

This commonly accepted view is the one taken, essentially, by Schoenberg, who is stirred to the following delightfully saucy fling at scepticism such as we have found in Ambros and Pastor:

They tell me "Science" doubts that the Organum ever existed. That is just what Science always does when something fails to serve her turn. But the Organum is a thing so intelligible in itself that we should have to invent it now and put it back into the past as a supplement if it had not really existed. But I believe it must have existed—the doubt of Science warrants me in that.<sup>2</sup>

I find it impossible to refrain from quoting Schoenberg at considerable length, especially since his brilliant book is not yet accessible in English dress.

Open parallel octaves and fifths were unconditionally forbidden; certain hidden cases on the other hand were conditionally permitted. First of all, those which could not be avoided. *Necessity knows no law.*<sup>3</sup>

So too:

Parallel fifths are mitigated if a harsh dissonance diverts the attention. They are then less mischievous than the harsh dissonance, and yet more strictly prohibited! And then they talked of "Horn-fifths," "Mozart-fifths," and, in distinction from fifths which one with a good ear might have overlooked, of "intentional fifths," i.e., fifths which were

<sup>1</sup>*Die Musik des griechischen Alterthums*, by Rudolf G. H. Westphal. Leipzig, 1893, pp. 24 and 63.

<sup>2</sup>*Harmonielehre*, Ed. of 1911. The quoted passages will be found on pp. 70-80.

<sup>3</sup>Jean de Muris' "prout possumus" over again.

bound to offend even one whose ear was not good. But there was discreet silence as to when one might intend something which was forbidden so strictly and as if on fundamental grounds, and why. The thought lay all too near: Is an intentional murder more pardonable than an unintentional?

These laws were based on the assertion that the independence of the parts was done away with by the parallel progression. That was the more intelligent way of putting it. The other simply asserted: Successions of that sort sound *bad*. Between the two there mediated a third in the proposition: They sound *bad* because the independence of the parts is done away with. Now it is perhaps not incorrect that in the case of parallel octaves the independence of the parts is apparently lost, just at the moment of the progression. But the assertion that they sound *bad*, or even that they sound *bad* because the independence of the parts is done away with, is absolutely false. For parallel octaves are employed in doubling, and often in reinforcing, too, and because of the good effect, of course. For no one would have written parallel octaves because of a worse effect. And the Mixture on the organ sets not only simultaneous octaves but simultaneous fifths to every part.

Schoenberg points out with keen perception that two parts will contribute in a thoroughly independent manner to the tone-mixture even if brought together in the unison, and concludes that, —in that sense,—one can hardly speak of an absolute suspension of independence:

The theorists have been put to more trouble in giving reasons for the prohibition of the fifths. So much the easier to confute. They said: Successive parallel fifths sound *bad*, or; Since the fifth is an overtone, it is like a mere shadow of the fundamental tone if it moves along parallel with it. If it is to make an independent impression it would have to move differently from the ground tone, etc. Strangely enough, progressions in fourths were only conditionally forbidden, although they are quite the same as to harmonic substance.



Regarded as to their content, the parallel fourths would have to be forbidden also. . . . For the essential, that is, the harmonic harshness can lie only in what pertains to harmony, in the intervals. But parallel fourths are permitted if covered by a lower lying third. Ex. 3 (a), (c). May not then parallel fifths also be permitted if covered by a similar third? Ex. 3 (b), (d). Harmonically no difference presents itself. Thus the question rests entirely upon the part-leading, on the parallel motion. But parallel motion does not sound bad, for parallel thirds and parallel sixths sound good. Does then this particular parallel motion in

fifths sound unconditionally bad while all other parallel motions sound at least conditionally good? Parallel octaves, for instance, which present the extreme on the one hand, i.e., the entire suspension of the independence of the parts as to substance and the progression in the most perfect consonance as to tonal effect, are at least conditionally permitted as reinforcements because of their agreeable sound. And parallel thirds and sixths, which also render the parts non-independent as to harmonic content, but as to tonal effect present the progression in a still less perfect consonance than that of the fifth, are also allowed. And so the parallel motion is permitted neither in the most perfect consonances alone (for thirds are less perfect than fifths), nor yet in the imperfect consonances only (for octaves are more perfect than fifths). And all the reasons brought against the fifth-progressions apply also to either the octave- or the third-progressions. *There must be other reasons.* I will try to solve the problem in a simpler way.

And Schoenberg goes on to show that singers must of necessity have hit upon a doubling in the fifth or fourth (contrary and oblique motion being not yet devised) when the octave would have carried certain voices too high, and the third would not have been accepted as a concord.

The ear was on the right road: unison, octave, fifth. . . . They sang in fifths for the same reason that they sang in octaves, because of their agreeable sound. And by one of those peculiar chances which so often give a cabalistic appearance to the secrets of acoustics, the singing in fifths, as in fourths, completely answered the demands of the human voice, for the tenor lies on an average a fifth above the bass, the alto about a fourth or fifth above the tenor, and the soprano, in turn, a fifth above the alto.

Our author then proceeds to what he calls a psychological explanation of the question.

Soon after the recognition of the third as a consonance, they must have discovered the possibility of contrary and oblique motion. . . . Singing in octaves and fifths did undoubtedly satisfy the taste in a thoroughly natural way. It was in keeping with the nature of tone and with the nature of man, and so it was beautiful. But the possibility of adding thirds to the octaves and fifths and of using contrary and oblique motion must have occasioned an intoxication which left everything which had gone before in bad favor, even though it was merely out of date: an intoxication such as we may observe at any great step forward, and not only in the arts, which so forgets gratitude for the preparatory labours of those who have gone before that it hates them, and does not bear in mind that progress would not be at all possible without them, even though they were full of errors. And this contempt for what is antiquated is just as great as it is unjustified. One who held to the golden mean would say: As for myself, I would rather not do anything antiquated because I know the advantages of the new, and because it would be out of keeping with the time. One may be out of keeping with the time only in this: that he hurries on ahead, not that he



hobbles after. And so we are justified in laughing at any one who writes '*gegen dem*' to-day, but we should know that '*gegen*' was actually used with both the dative and the accusative cases in earlier times, and therefore is not wrong, but merely out of date.

. . . If delight in acquisition be mated to the restraints of a guild-craft, the child of the wedding can only be Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy, no longer under the necessity of achieving what has just been won, finds her task in this, to hold fast to it by exaggeration. She devises indeed everything that her premises grant, yet not only leads to errors through her exaggerations, but even erects a bulwark against any new acquisition. And so it may well be imagined how out of the propositions: "It is no longer necessary to compose only in octaves and fifths," "To octaves and fifths one may also add thirds," "Instead of parallel motion one may also employ contrary or oblique motion," were derived: "It is bad to compose in octaves and fifths," "One must add the third to octaves and fifths," "Contrary and oblique motion are better than parallel motion." Now, if it be borne in mind that such considerations were given out and accepted as rules whose infringement was punished by the Interdict, one understands that the fountainhead might easily be forgotten, that one might easily forget that *octaves and fifths in themselves were not bad*, but, on the contrary, *in themselves were good*, that they had merely been found old-fashioned, primitive, relatively inartistic, but that *no physical or æsthetic reason* presented itself for not availing oneself of them again, occasionally. And then if one consider that these rules, formulated as "Thou shalt not . . ." were promulgated abroad for centuries, it will become clear that the ear forgot the agreeable sound which it had once discovered, and its employment caused a shock because of the *estranging quality always inherent in the new*. I think that since the progression in octaves and fifths was not used for centuries, the ear came to regard the occasional appearance of such combinations as strange, whereas the reverse is the truth. It was old, but only forgotten. And so it is no evidence against the view here presented if a musician says: "Yes, but I notice those fifths; they shock me, and I find they sound unpleasant," for the new always offends and is found unpleasant, although it is not that.

Thus, while Ambros and Pastor, and all whom they represent, declare Hucbald's fifths and fourths so pedantic, clumsy and artificial, and so distressing in actual effect that they could never have been really sung, Schoenberg,—whom none will call a reactionary,—protests that they are so evidently the most natural thing in the world, and so good in effect, that they must inevitably have been sung and may still be sung, with discretion. And are we not bound to admit that it is Schoenberg who has the right of it, at least in his assertion that the fifths sound good? Examples from every side go to show that we are finding them pleasant.

Take, almost at random, the following from Casella's exquisite bit of serious jesting, *A la Manière de Debussy*:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Édition A. Z. Mathot, Paris.

Ex. 4 Lent

What is this but Hucbald's *Organum redivivum*? It is our Example No. 2 all over again, but enriched by the use of further resources at the command of our ten fingers on the keyboard. We have not only octaves, fifths and fourths, but sevenths for good measure, even thirds. And do we not indeed hear spring from this mingling of sounds a sweet harmony, just as Hucbald assured us we should? His example looks thin and artless beside Casella's, and lacks something of the "very rich and dense harmony" which Pastor found essential for the fifths, but the aim and method are the same.

However, this is not polyphony at all; not the independent leading of a stated number of distinct voices. It is nothing more nor less than a more richly nourished melodic line,—as Mozart throws voices and orchestra into bare octaves at the words, *de ore leonis* in the Offertory of his *Requiem*. We have here a reinforcing of the effect of the octave by the addition of still other sonorities. It is *Organum*, in its earliest, simplest form, and we have rediscovered it, and find it good.

It goes without saying that the thing, carried on in such persistent simplicity as in the above example, would soon run itself to death, just as it did in Hucbald's day. It is already doing so. Schoenberg adds a footnote to the recent "Third Edition" of his *Harmonielehre* (p. 82) to the effect that he dislikes this pseudo-modern *quinting*:

neither because it has the effect of being new nor because it is actually old, nor yet because it has no more merit than the sixth-chord progres-

sions which the predecessors of these new men wrote in similar passages. Perhaps because of the wantonness and insolence which it displays,—an ignoble sort of thing,—but most probably on this account chiefly, because there seems to me more and more to be something right lying at the bottom of the prohibition of the fifths, but something liable to misunderstanding. I mean the shying at the consonance, which is perhaps by inversion identical with the impulse to draw the remoter consonances into the composition.

But give all these objections due weight, and the fact remains that successive perfect parallels are agreeable and serviceable to-day, as in Hucbald's day, if used in Hucbald's style.

But this fact does not give them the freedom of the style of Palestrina. Schoenberg protests, indeed, that the fifths were outlawed from music not with justice but with injustice, and declares, as we saw in the quotation given above, that "no physical or æsthetic reason presents itself" against their occasional use. Yet Schoenberg himself, when treating especially of parallel octaves, finds a reason which he classes as a matter of handicraft in support of the ancient prohibition:

A setting of three, four or five voices has been chosen for a piece, after mature consideration, because everything could not be said with fewer, and more voices could hardly be kept busy. Such consideration ought to precede the choice of the number of voices, and the decision ought to justify itself in every moment of the piece. Thus every voice, at every moment, ought to have something to do which it alone does. If now, in a thin piece of harmony, the task,—to go from d to e,—is already fulfilled by one voice, it is *superfluous, consequently wrong*, for another voice also to go from d to e, *if that was really and exclusively the task*. If one does not know of anything else for this voice to do, let it pause. But not to know how to do anything else with it is, in general, a sign of no outstanding skill. So one must take pains to do something else with it.

Schoenberg limits his premises very carefully, but did the ancient prohibitions pretend to any wider sphere of authority?

If we have at last got hold of a reason for prohibiting the octaves which even Schoenberg will accept, must we not expect to find the same reason applying to fifths and fourths as well,—at least to the extent that fifths and fourths are like octaves? And they are very like. Schoenberg's octave is not "superfluous, consequently wrong" because one part does exactly what the other does: d - e is not the same thing as D - E. It is an echoing of D - E at the interval of the first natural harmonic. Is not an echoing at the second harmonic at least open to suspicion? Old Marx of Berlin says that the octaves "give the phrase an ambiguous appearance, sound hollow from the web, and rob it of its full variety

of voices," and that from the fifths "we experience the same hollowness of sound." The fifths may be less objectionable than the octaves in that they are a step further removed from the unison, and so less subject to apparent absorption in the fundamental part and less likely to lose their value as an independent polyphonic factor: but they are perhaps more objectionable than octaves, on the other hand, because a step further removed from the perfection of the unison, and consequently less euphonious. But the difference either way is one of degree, not of kind.

One is tempted, indeed, to make a rough generalization, in the light of present-day practice, and claim that these two forces act in a compensating way; that the sheer force of the parallel motion is enough to carry any interval whatsoever along with it. Strauss throws out a pronouncement by trumpets in major seconds; in Strawinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* a pair of clarinets sing a melody, *cantabile*, in major sevenths, just a half-tone off the octave. A long list of examples is not necessary. The parallel motion seems to act here somewhat as it would with a crowd in a city street at the rush hour. It would take a disorganized mass of, say, ten thousand individuals, each going his own way at his own gait, and set them shoulder to shoulder with every step in perfect rhythm; then they would no longer be ten thousand individuals, but a single unit, like a flowing river. Even two men in a crowd, walking in step, would stand out a little from the rest as a larger unit, if they were the only two so walking. And it is the parallel motion itself, and no uniformity of person or costume, that brings about this larger unity. The individual is lost in the whole, which is precisely what we want in that simpler type of organum which aims merely at an enriched melodic sonority, and just as precisely what we do not want in polyphony proper.

But our rough generalization is misleading, however alluring; partly because the more simply related intervals do undoubtedly fall into line more naturally than the remoter.—just as two men of nearly equal weight and height will create a more immediate impression of uniformity than two of marked physical difference,—and partly because of the influence of tonality. And tonality, once it enters into the discussion, can hardly take second place therein.

If the reader will picture to himself a series of scales written out, first in parallel octaves, then in fifths, seconds, sixths, thirds, etc., along the circle of the fifths, he will realize at a glance how the cross-relations, the contradictions of a central tonality increase, once we leave the octave. The octave simply begins the scale over again and so does not offend in this respect, but with the fifths

the *f* in the scale of *C* is contradicted by the *f*♯ of the scale of *G*. The scale of *D* persists in this error and makes matters worse by clashing a *c*♯ against the tonic of the scale of *C*, and so it goes from worse to worse. The result is the same, if we circle the keys in the opposite direction,—through the flats.

So tonality and the very laws of vibration conspire to place the fifths and fourths next the octave as to serviceability. This is just what we should expect, but it is contrary to the general misconception,—one of many misconceptions attending our subject,—that the fifths are especially discriminated against by this ruling against the perfect parallels. Even Schoenberg seems not to be thinking so clearly for himself as he usually does when he asks,—as we saw above,—why fifths alone should be prohibited when octaves on the one hand and thirds on the other are at least provisionally permitted. Neither the octaves nor the thirds are permitted! It is the parallel motion itself,—the *perfectly* parallel motion,—that is forbidden, within our polyphonic, diatonic system. Parallel octaves are forbidden in every text-book on the same page that forbids the fifths. They are used outside the sphere of strict part-writing, to be sure, but so are the fifths, though to a less degree, as in the organ Mixtures and the Hucbald and modernistic organum. As for the thirds and sixths, a series in perfect parallel is so utterly preposterous, within our tonal system, that it has never been necessary to legislate against them. They forbid themselves. Two major thirds on a whole step produce the false relation of the tritone. If that does not offend you, then you are confessedly not so sensitive musically as your ancestors, whose organum you presume to despise. Two major thirds on a half-step have no place in our major scale, the foundation of our musical system. We may place two minor thirds next each other in the derivative minor scale, it is true, but three of them give the diminished fifth, just as three major thirds in diatonic succession give the augmented fifth, and thus, major or minor, they contradict our tonal system, which hinges upon the perfect fifth. Let any one play over "My country, 'tis of thee," let us say, or the hymn tune *Dundee*, first in thirds or sixths, either major or minor, but never mixing the two, and then in fifths, or, better still, sing them with a friend capable of enjoying so simple a folly, and he will grant that the latter are sweet reasonableness after the first. The only answer to the question: Why, since fifths are more perfect than thirds, does not a succession of fifths sound better than a succession of thirds? is surprisingly simple: It does!

I had supposed that no one earlier than our so-called modernists had ever taken the trouble to write out a series of genuinely parallel thirds or sixths, but Dr. A. Eaglefield Hull has set me right in his *Modern Harmony*, where he says:

If we take a succession of sixths or thirds in either of the diatonic modes we shall have a certain alternation in the quality of these intervals. They are all sixths or thirds but some are major and some minor. The older composers, however, were not slow to see the special uses of a succession of exactly equal intervals. A suspension of diatonic tonality was secured and the first principles of pure Impressionism were laid in the *melismae* of Chopin and the cadenzas of Liszt. In these we see a working out of little finger-patterns in an entirely communistic spirit, as if there were twelve notes to the octave . . . (p. 36).

So the parallels lead to a "suspension of diatonic tonality," or to atonality, as well as to polytonality, or a clashing of tonalities, one over the other.

We do not claim that tonality offers the only explanation of the ruling against the parallels. Other considerations play their part, as has been shown above. The effective independence of the parts is one of these; the advisability of interposing the more pliable "imperfect intervals" between those which are by nature unyielding is another; the tendency to avoid too much of the simpler consonances and to seek out those which are remoter, is still another, and the one of them all which Schoenberg believes to lie at the root of the matter, as we saw above. The sheer force of traditional good form must also be counted in, although it lies quite at the other end of the matter from the root, being superficial. But good form must rest ultimately on solid grounds, or any one in the grand style would sweep it away in an instant, and composers in the grand style, from Handel through Beethoven to Wagner, have not swept aside the ruling against the parallels.

If we grant that tonality does not offer the only explanation, we must also grant that sometimes it seems to offer no explanation at all. In Cherubini's *Counterpoint and Fugue*, for instance, the only reason given for the prohibition of the parallels is this:

A succession of fifths forms a discordance because the upper part progresses in one key while the lower part moves in another.

Just how a succession of concords, the most perfect next to the octave, can form a discordance is not made clear. Whoever wrote the text meant, apparently, nothing more definite than a generally unpleasant effect. Let that pass. But whether two



successive fifths do necessarily involve two simultaneous keys is a more pertinent question. In the example set to prove the contention,—a scale of G over C,—we must run clear through to the next to the last step to find the fatal note of disagreement. We may keep in mind that this one note of disagreement was enough to bring Hucbald's structure, in its primal perfection, tumbling down about his ears, and yet ask why we may not progress in fifths within those portions of the scale which do not manifest this disagreement. Take the common cadence, IV to V to I. Why not lead bass and tenor (if in C) from *f - c'* to *g - d'*? Can anyone pretend that two keys are necessarily indicated? Each voice presents, it would appear, a progression entirely appropriate to the key of C and not suggestive of any other key, and, however we rearrange the passage in the interests of better part-leading, these same notes will be found, in one part or another, in the two successive chords. But perhaps we are not looking deep enough for the operations of tonality. If we work in a chromatic genus of twelve equally tempered semitones, with no physiognomy, so to speak, no characteristic grouping of whole and half-tones, related to some central, generating tone, no one is going to hold it up against us, if we let the parts slide from fifth to fifth. It is altogether appropriate that they should do so. The equally uncharacterized whole-tone scale is in somewhat the same case, as is any genuinely atonal system,—if such there be. But the traditional modes and our diatonic scale constitute definitely organized individualities, to which the several voices therein moving must subordinate themselves. Each tone and each triad in the scale has its definite and distinct function in relation to the other tones and triads. And in each particular instance of the parallels it may be possible to see that here the bass might better have progressed by a vigorous step of a fourth or fifth, without corresponding call for activity in an upper part; that there one or another part might better have filled its natural function in the whole by rising rather than falling, or vice versa; that here, again, one or another of the chords might have been better spread, or a more suitable note of the triad doubled, all in relation to tonality, as controlling the whole.

It was modality or tonality that broke down an organum based upon perfect parallelism, and now that tonality seems to be loosening its grip it is only to be expected that the essentially atonal parallels should begin to reappear.

Are we then to look for a gradual evaporation, so to speak, of tonality, and with it of the effects of parallelism? Schoenberg says:

I do not believe that tonality is an eternal, a natural law of music, although I recognize perfectly how well the purpose of this law corresponds to the simplest conditions of the fundamental chord. . . . Not every biography, for example, need begin with the birth or even with the ancestors of the hero and end with his death . . . and yet it must be granted that tonality is a legitimate art-means. For it assures a good effect by means of a formal conclusiveness, and,—as was said above,—it corresponds to the simplest conditions of its material. Whether it also suffices for the more complicated, may well be doubted. In order to form a judgment it is not necessary to think of the development portions of sonatas and symphonies. Leave the music of to-day out of consideration. It is enough to look at a composition by, say, Wagner, Bruckner or Hugo Wolf to raise the doubt whether the rigid maintainance of the same fundamental tone at the beginning and end of the piece is organic to its exuberant momentum. . . . Let the pupil learn the laws and effects of tonality as though they were still binding, but let him know of the stirrings which lead to their abolition. Let him know that in everything which lives is contained that which alters, develops and dissolves it. . . . Let him learn from this example what is eternal,—that which changes, and what is temporary,—that which exists. In this way it will be made clear to him that much of that which we have held to be æsthetic, i.e., the essential basis of the beautiful, is by no means always founded in the essence of the thing: that it is the incompleteness of our mind which compels us to those compromises through which we achieve order. For order is not demanded by the object, but by the subject. . . . And the fashioning of that which the artist really wishes to present, the reduction to those bounds which constitute artistic form, is occasioned only by our inability to comprehend what is not within our survey, not ordered. Order, which we call artistic form, is not the aim in itself, but a makeshift. . . . It should not be said that order, clarity and intelligibility are prejudicial to beauty, but they are not a necessary factor, without which there would be no beauty, but a chance one. . . . When once one has abandoned the illusion that the artist creates for the sake of beauty, and recognizes that only the need to produce compels him to bring forth what will perhaps afterward be acknowledged as beautiful, then will he also understand that clarity and intelligibility are not conditions which the artist needs to put into his work, but conditions which the spectator wishes to find fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> . . .

However, the urge towards production, which Schoenberg declares to be the artist's sole concern, is, after all, an urge towards utterance, and utterance or expression is essentially a putting into form. Whether the artist's utterance be immediately comprehensible or not, is a secondary matter,—he has always been willing to wait for future generations. But in order to satisfy his own impulse towards expression, he must have the consciousness of having achieved articulation, order, intelligibility. The composer

<sup>1</sup>*Harmonielehre*, pp. 28-29 and 31-32.

goes to the phenomena of sound for his material, but these phenomena do not constitute music. They must be shaped for that.

We may seem to have strayed pretty far into the abstract: from the perfect parallels to tonality, and from tonality to articulation, order and intelligibility. This is largely because we found Schoenberg so engaging. But we have not really left the road. So far as tonality means relation and intelligible disposition, it would seem that it must always be present, if in some way far beyond our present comprehension, in any human form of expression. And together with it must persist, in some enlarged sense, the effects, advantageous in some cases and prejudicial in others, of perfectly parallel motion. To give Schoenberg the last word:

I believe that in the long run it will be possible to recognize the same laws in the harmony of us ultra-moderns as in the harmony of the ancients,—only suitably enlarged, more universally comprehended.

## THE CAMBODIAN BALLET

By LILY STRICKLAND-ANDERSON

Tout passe. L'art robuste  
Seul a l'éternité,  
Le buste  
Survit à la cité.

**M**Y first introduction to the Cambodian Dancers took place in Marseilles at the *Exposition Coloniale*, in 1921, when some of the members of the *Royal Corps de Ballet* of Cambodia were imported to give their dances before the splendid replica of the ancient Temple of Angkor-Vat.

The impression of the colossal Temple, with its great pyramidal towers, its elaborately carved pillars and pediments, was perfectly sustained; surrounded as it was with the mirror-like waters of a lake, with green plane-trees and vivid tropical flora.

The ambitious work of the reconstruction of the famous Temple was conceived and executed by master-artists whose sympathetic minds gave to their labours insight and understanding in a remarkable degree. The finished production was more than an imitation; it was a perfectly authentic picture, faithfully given, of the most wonderful and fascinating ruins in Asia. We could easily imagine that we were standing in the forest of Cambodia before the entrance gates of the vast structure, the date of whose origin has so puzzled antiquarians and students of antiquity.

The architecture of the Temple is Hindu-Brahmanic, touched with Buddhistic influence, and richly decorated with a multitude of the images of the old pre-Vedic Pantheon as well as the later innovations of Buddhist iconography.

My interest was centered upon the carvings on the Temple walls, for it was from these sculptured figures of the Apsaras, or Celestial Dancers of Indra's Court, that the original of the present-day Cambodian Ballet has sprung into being. The little ballerinas of the Palace, whose lives are dedicated to the preservation and presentation of the old traditional Sacred Dances of their religion, gave the same program of music in Marseilles that they perform in Cambodia. All that was lacking was the historical background in its native tropical setting.

The tiny dancers seemed as if they were statuettes come to life. Their heavy and ornate costumes of brilliant colours were perfect copies of the old stone Apsaras as they stand in the Temple niches; their very gestures are the same, and they wear the same Prachedee-shaped head-dress, the same style of jewels and decorations.

In the ensemble of the Ballet the little figures, gowned in mauves, peacock blues, purples, reds and yellows, made a prismatic composite of kaleidoscopic colour as they flashed in the sun, moving in the rhythmic measures of the dance before the Temple gates.

The Court musicians, also imported for the occasion, played weird and plaintive tunes on wind-instruments, strings and brass; accenting the time of the dance with cymbals, gongs, drums, bells and castanets. From *largo* to *furioso* the music swelled in waves of drum-smitten sound, until at the climax both dancers and players seemed intoxicated with the rhythm of the barbaric concert.

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It was not until 1923 that I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity of going to Indo-China, where stands the real Temple of Angkor-Vat in the forest of Cambodia; ruins enmeshed in legends of beauty and mystery. Like Pierre Loti, I had felt the charm of this ancient buried city and its Temple grip my imagination. "There was a picture at which I stopped with a kind of thrill, of great strange towers entwined with exotic branches, the Temple of mysterious Angkor."

We disembarked at Saigon, somewhat facetiously called "The Paris of the East," for when I was there in April the heat of a tropical summer had already descended upon the country and an air of drowsy somnolence brooded over the little city. The atmosphere was distinctly that of a Lotus Land, and it was only after the siesta hour that an air of animation and activity stirred the town. The tables of the many open-air cafés gradually filled, and sitting there, one could watch a procession of strange faces go by. Annamese, Chinese, French soldiers, Tonking troopers, coolies and dark-skinned, scantily-clad natives combined to give an oriental atmosphere to the *Rue Catinat* and the *Boulevard Bonnard*.

In this transient expression of animation the streets of Saigon bore some semblance to the Parisian "Boulevard atmosphere";

but it was all touched with a langour and a half-dream that is common to all cities of the East. Saigon, the capitol of Cochinchina, with its Opéra, its Cathedral, its Gardens, Cinemas, and Cafés, makes a brave show as an outpost of Empire, and endeavors to capture and hold some feeling of the Motherland for the inhabitants who live in lonely exile, so far from *la belle France*.

But just beyond the city, up the Mekong River, the scene changes at once, and one is plunged into the real atmosphere of Cambodia. Along the steamy sweltering banks of the winding waterway, luxuriant flowers and verdure lend an exotic note of wild beauty, and the country appears savage and untamed.

As the breathless day was drawing to its end, the sky turned to burnished copper and jade, and a "tide of stars surged in the limitless sea of the firmament." Fireflies flitted in the gloom, and twinkling lights from little stations along the way pointed to life on the river-banks in camp and village.

One enters into the solitude of the great forest and finally emerges at Pnom-Penh, the modern capitol of Cambodia.

The present King of Cambodia is Sisowatti, a monarch of ninety-two years, who succeeded to the throne in 1904 at the death of his brother King Norodom. In 1865 the French established a protectorate over the ancient Kingdom of Cambodia and still maintain it.

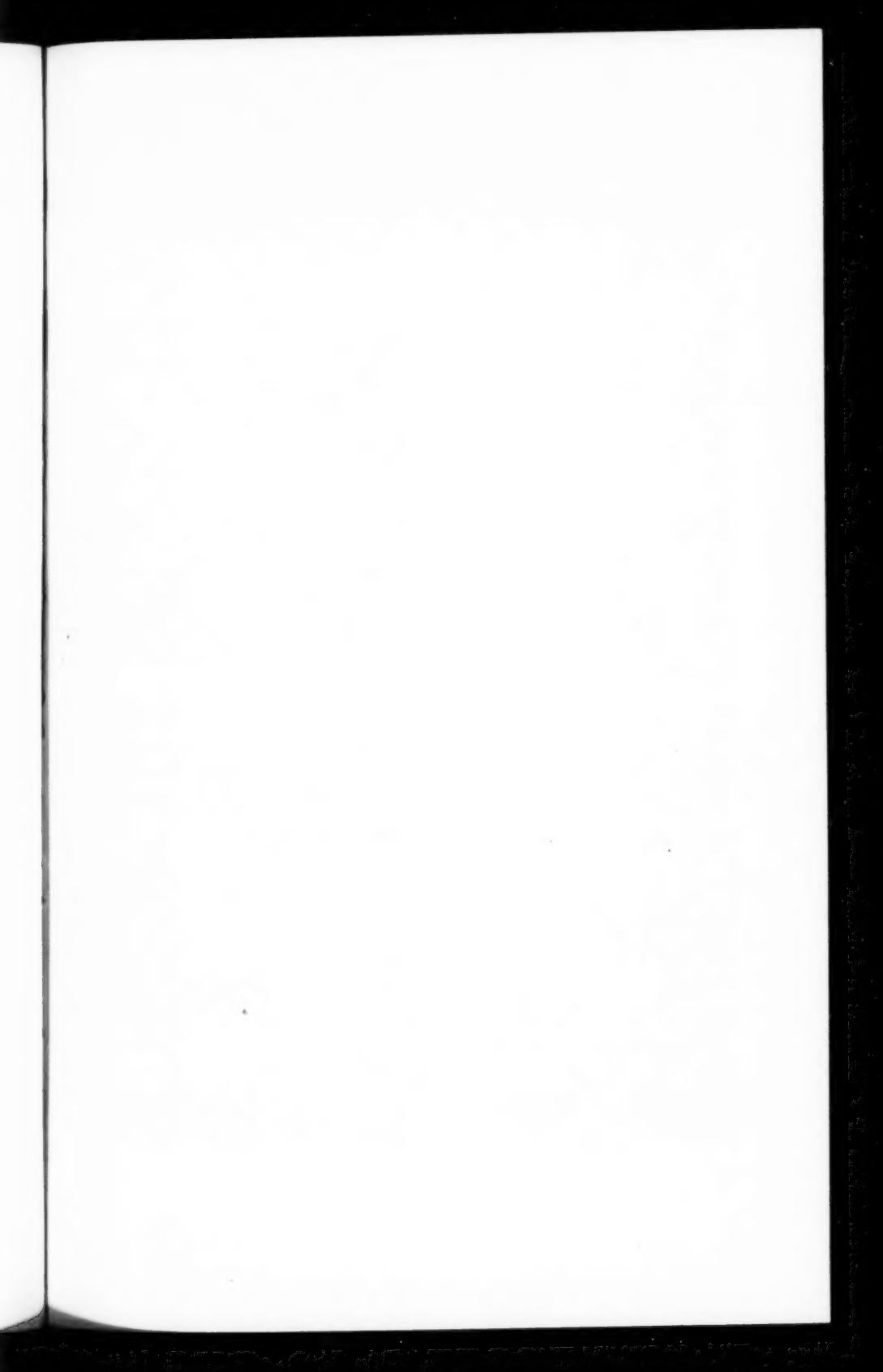
Cambodia covers 37,000 square miles; a fertile country having about two millions population. Buddhism is the prevailing religion, which is, however, mixed with the Brahmanism introduced into the country unknown centuries ago from India.

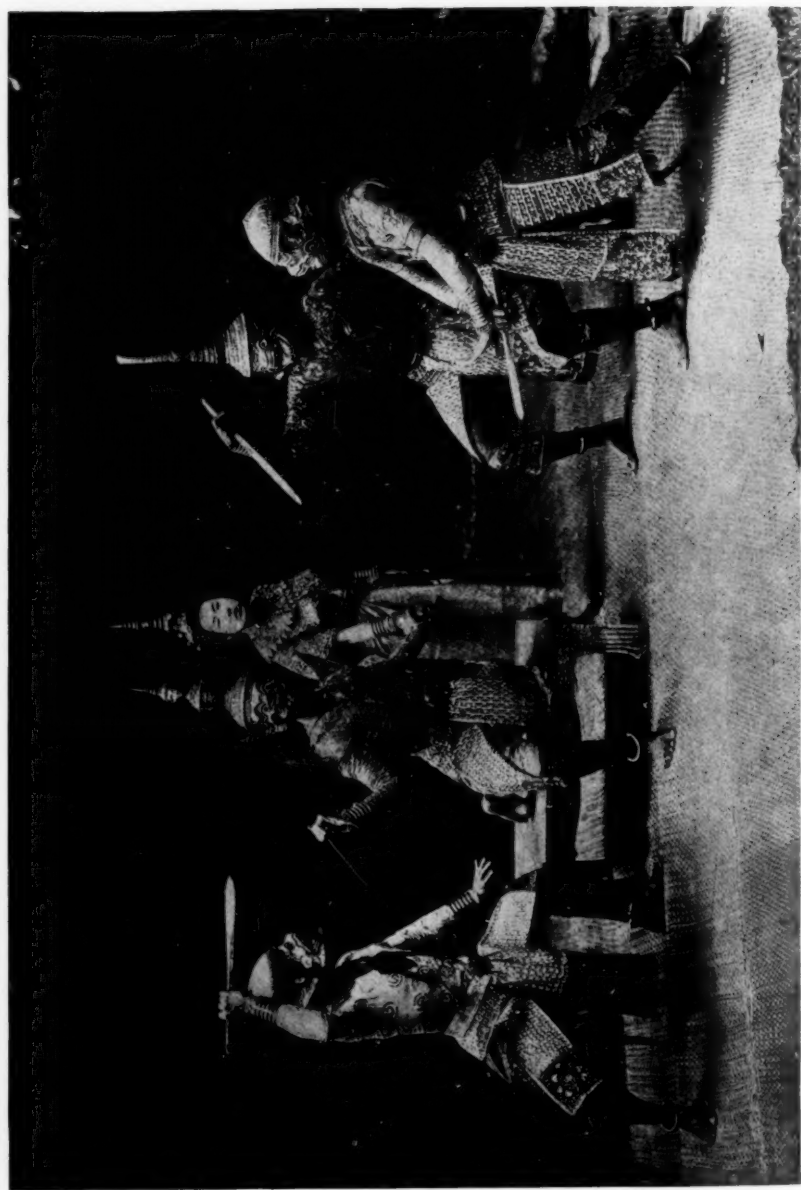
Beyond the river-banks stands the great lonely and silent Palace of the King; but that silence is broken on the occasion of the annual Water Festivals, and when the King calls upon his Court Ballet to perform the old traditional dances of Cambodia.

There is an echo of wind-blown pagoda bells in the air; and always a drowsy and exotic sense of solitude and mystery in this little known country. In the great Palace of the King live the dancing-girls who give their lives to perpetuating and preserving the ancient Sacred Music of Cambodia. They are small bronze-skinned creatures, with short hair and delicate bodies, who dress in beautifully coloured silks and jewels and haunt the old courts of the Palace like little figurines come to life.

These ballerinas are trained, almost from infancy, in the rituals of the Cambodian Dances. Their limbs are made flexible and supple; their ears attuned to the rhythm and beat of the music they interpret, and they are taught to perfect the intricacies







Cambodian Pantomime Dancers, illustrating an episode from "The Ramayana"

of the spectacular ballets at which they perform on special Buddhist Feast Days or at State Ceremonials.

It is in Pnom-Penh that the most sumptuous pageants and spectacles take place nowadays; but all the work is based upon the old music-forms that were handed down from the legends of Angkor-Vat and its devotees. The "corps de ballet" of the Court give their historical and legendary dances by order of the present King, in the great Hall of the Palace, and one sees in them a living echo of the ancient dancing-girls of the ruined city of Angkor-Thom.

The Ballet is given on a grand scale; sometimes several hundred performers take part in the ensembles; these, together with the musicians, form an impressive sight. The prescribed number of instruments for the Ballet is thirty, including dulcimers, wooden harmonicas, flutes, drums, gongs, bells and cymbals.

The character of the music is weirdly Asiatic; melodic, rhythmic, minor and reiterative. Always beginning with a slow movement, the tempo gradually increases until it works up to a frenzied climax, both musicians and dancers keeping perfect time to the accelerated tempo of the music. There is an intoxication in the monotony of the plaintive cadences that almost sends the listener into a trance; the insistent throbbing of drums, now muted and now swelling, produces a feeling of tenseness and excitement, and one is carried away for the moment on waves of sound.

The Cambodian Ballet can be properly appreciated only when seen in its proper setting, when the *tout ensemble* is perfectly harmonious. The little dancers are living likenesses of the sculptured Apsaras on the walls of Angkor-Vat; even their features show a blending of Hindu and Cambodian ancestry; and it is no great stretch of imagination to fancy that these dancers are the reborn or reincarnated maids of Indra's court. Their costumes are copied in every detail from the bas-reliefs of the ancient Apsaras. The jewelled ornaments are faithfully reproduced in reality, and the gorgeous gold and silver and prismatic colours are beautiful in every respect. The helmet-like head-dresses, which taper to a point like the pagoda roofs, are copied from the Prachedees of Siam and Cambodia, and are seen in the Temple sculptures.

The faces of the dancers are powdered a dead-white; their lips are painted scarlet and their eyelids tinged with antimony, thus carrying the ghostly illusion still further. The Ballet moves in perfect accord, possible only after years of patient training and

practice. It is the largest Ballet ensemble known to the East and is remarkable in the artistry of its conception and execution.

The main movements of the Ballet consist of a series of postures, timed in rhythm to plaintive and expressive music. There are pantomimes, and scenes from the Ramayana, which present the various episodes in the life of Rama and Sita. Sita is impersonated, and love-scenes with Rama lend a gentler note to the music's mood, as the melody grows soft and plaintive and the strings lead the theme instead of the brass that is so popular for the more heroic and dramatic episodes.

The male dancers give mock-battles, and in masks and armour engage in mimic combat with sword and lance, striking warlike attitudes to martial music.

Hanuman, the Monkey-general, enters upon the stage, a masked and grotesque figure, posturing in fantastic positions copied from the carved Hanumans on the walls of Angkor-Vat. The music is weirdly appropriate, bizarre, and humorous. Hanuman is followed by his band of monkey satyrs, who sport rhythmically with the young Apsaras.

The legendary Past of the days of the Ramayana lives again, and the memories of the heroic epic so dear to India's heart are kept forever fresh in the minds of a people who have merged their own old faith into that of Buddhism.

The pantomimes are wonderfully effective—graphic, dramatic, virile and artistic in conception. They are planned as nearly as possible along the lines laid down a thousand years ago when the city of Angkor-Thom was vibrant with life and animation, and the now silent halls of the Temple were filled with the sound of joyous music on festival days.

The function of perpetuating the legends of the Ramayana is regarded as a sacred inheritance, religiously observed by the Court Musicians. I do not think there is another Ballet like it in the whole world, nor one so unique, so charming and so fascinating.

The general form of the Ballet has been taken from the old traditional Nautch of India, whose disciples claim direct descent from the celestial Apsaras who were the first Nautch Girls of legend. According to the usual method of dancing observed particularly in religious ceremonies, the rhythmic movements begin with one hand and arm, gradually extending to and permeating the entire body. The dancers are lithe, graceful, deliberate and intent, and every minute figure of the dance is carefully followed out along lines laid down by the old rules. So perfect

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Cambodian Imperial Corps de Ballet



is the muscular control of the performers that they do not appear to have a bone in their bodies; only a contortionist could imitate their intricate movements. It is especially impressive when a large number of dancers move as one person, with perfect coördination. Dancers and musicians are instinct with rhythm, and it is a beautiful sight to watch the Ballet in the measures of the spectacular dances.

There is of course no harmony in the music; it is melodic and reiterated monotonously, soporific when heard from a distance and nerve-wracking when one is too close to the pulsing drums and brass. Flutes, cymbals, gongs, drums, zithers and all manner of "traps" are the favoured instruments of the orchestra, the members of which usually inherit their calling as Court Musicians. The work is entirely memorized by all taking part.

I think, for my part, that our grand classic dance, as it is executed by our foremost French, Italian or Russian stars, when rising to the height of their talent, is the most magnificent manifestation of choreography, and never have I seen anything in the world that could compare with this marvellous message of the flesh. But could all this prevent one from being profoundly stirred by the mysterious charm of the Cambodian artists, from enjoying the slow evolvment of their sacred dances, their undulant movements, their leisurely gyrations, all the nervous, subtle life that animates their fingers and so singularly contrasts with the impassibility of their mask-like faces? Let us be supremely eclectic in art-matters; let us relish equally and voluptuously the most diverse manifestations of beauty; let us strive to understand all, so that we can love all. As for myself, I shall long retain the strange impression of the dancing-girls of the king of Cambodia, living enigmas, evocations from an antique world that our intelligence approaches only with a feeling of its own impotence; radiant phantoms out of an inscrutable past swaying their calices like censers accompanying the evolution of the delirious love-scenes wherein the voluptuous Apsaras stretch out to the Brahmanic gods their yellow arms, sinuous as those that have just been undulating before us in this lovely Provençal night. (Ludovic Naudeau.)

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From Pnom-Penh one goes directly to Angkor-Thom in the Cambodian Forest, the vast buried city that lies beyond the lake which is itself a submerged forest, hidden away in the lonely jungle.

How did the Brahmans come into Cambodia, and when? Echo answers as to "when," but it is known that these early Priests of an ancient Indian cult came across, probably through

Assam, Manipur, and Upper Burma through the Shan states, and into Siam. No facts of this migration are recorded in history; one only knows that they came, unknown centuries ago, and built the great city of Angkor-Thom and the Temple of Angkor-Vat that dominates the vast ruins. The country that they settled in was then a part of Siam, but was later ceded to Cambodia and the French.

At any rate, the Temple stands to-day as an eloquent monument of work dedicated to the honour of the godheads of a pre-Vedic Hindu faith and the later worship of Buddha. Buddha's image has a place in the Hindu Pantheon, as he is regarded as the ninth avatura, or incarnation, of Vishnu, the second person of the Hindu Trinity. His followers established themselves at a much later date, centuries after the Brahmans had built Angkor-Vat; so that one sees the multitudinous figures of pre-Vedic, Vedic and Buddhist religions carved on the walls of Angkor-Vat.

The legend of the Ramayana has been perpetuated in stone bas-reliefs, and woven into the stories of Buddhism. The vanguard of the pioneers of Buddhism laid the cornerstone of their faith in the old Temple and turned it into a Buddhist stronghold. While the newer religion supplanted the old, many of the legends and stories are so intertwined that only a student of such matters can separate them.

Angkor-Vat is now a ruin; the old city where it stands has fallen into decay, forever oppressed by the relentless jungle. One hears the forlorn echoes from a long dead past in the great empty courts where bats flit in the gloom and silence broods eternally.

The principal temple of the ancient city of Angkor-Thom is Angkor-Vat, a great structure whose grey towers rise above the buried ruins of the once vast city; ruins being slowly strangled in the sinister embrace of the primitive jungle.

The huge conical towers; the exterior courts; the stairways surmounted by intricate carvings; the sculptured Nagas, lotus flowers, and dancing-girls, are all there to-day, as they have been for a thousand, and perhaps several thousand, years. On the walls of the Temple the history of the Ramayana is carved in bas-relief; around this heroic epic many stories have been woven, and on it many of the most important episodes of the Cambodian Ballet are founded. The seven-headed serpents of Vishnu guard the entrance gates; and beyond, in the courts, a mournful silence prevails, where the sculptured company of gods, demigods and beasts waits forlornly through the ages for who knows what resurrection?

Save for the muted hum of the jungle insect life, dead silence broods over the haunted Temple. Buddhist priests, saffron-robed and shaven-headed, live outside its walls a lonely life of sacrifice as religious guardians of the venerable ruins. Their lives are dedicated to guarding the Temple, and they pursue their duties, in chants, mantras, oblations and ceremonies, in isolation.

At the very front of the huge and desolate gates they spend their days in following a sacred calling in the name of Buddha, "the gentle, the Lord of Light." The monotonous litany of the reiterated "Om mani padme hum" sounds on the still air, punctuating the stillness in solemn tones. On special feast-days the old dances are celebrated at Angkor-Vat, and for a time the ghostly solitude is enlivened with sounds of animation and praise. The priests share their vigil through the years with the sculptured nagas, the lions, the gods, the Buddhas, and the dancing-girls, and jealously guard the dead past of the old Temple in inscrutable silence.

The Apsaras, how pretty and smiling they are, in their coiffures of goddesses, yet always with that expression of reserve and mystery, which is so little assuring. Richly adorned with bracelets, necklaces, head-dresses of precious stones, tall tiaras either pointed or surmounted with a tuft of plumes, they hold between their delicate fingers, sometimes a lotus-flower and sometimes an enigmatic emblem. (Pierre Loti.)

The fact that the dancing-girls are repeated in endless replicas lays significant stress upon the fact that music played a most important part in the offices of the old Hindu religion. It is this fact that intrigues us most, and we study with fascinated attention the carved figures of the Apsaras who smile subtly through the centuries, as if they held the secret of the old Temple, its symbols and origin, inviolate.

They are the divine Apsaras of the Hindu theogonies. How lovingly the artists of old chiselled and polished their virgin-like breasts! What has become, I wonder, of the dust of the beauties from whom the perfect bodies were copied? (Pierre Loti.)

Perhaps, on some enchanted moonlight night, the smiling Apsaras step down from their niches in the Temple walls and weave again the measures of their old dances, to the ghostly beat of drum and wail of flute; perhaps they come to life again and dance as they once did in Indra's court. Who knows?

But they have waited in the forest for centuries, waited in their carven garments of stone, ready to respond to the call of Shiva, Lord of the Dance of the Universe, who shall sound the

drum that brings them to life once more. They wait with all their glorious company in the vast lonely ruins of Angkor-Vat; wait in the silence and loneliness of the forsaken courts once vibrant with the life of worshippers long since vanished.

A distressful lesson in humility is here borne in upon us, puny beings that we are. Alas! alas! what a multitude of artisans and sculptors once swarmed around these edifices and patiently wrought upon these walls to adorn them with their ingenious imaginings. Here were conceived vast dreams, complicated cosmogonies, prodigious speculations on the origin of man and his destiny. And to-day there is left nothing of all that but stones buried in the depths of the forest. (Ludovic Naudeau.)

The old gods and the dancing-girls, standing in pathetic and frozen immobility, seem to say, "We are quite dead, you see, and quite harmless. It is not out of irony we smile thus, with eyelids half closed; it is because we have attained peace, peace without dreams." (Loti.)

But the lonely dancing-girls on the Temple walls are not forgotten; they have passed on a precious heritage to their followers in the form of the little bronze ballerinas of Cambodia, whose lives are spent in revivifying the old traditional dances of India.

# PITCH AND VIBRATO IN ARTISTIC SINGING

## AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

By MAX SCHOEN

THE study here reported consists of an analysis of what actually takes place when a song is rendered by a great artist. The recorded voices of five world-famous opera singers were analysed by a rigid scientific procedure in the act of rendering the same composition. We shall call these five singers M, G, A, D, E. The Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria" was chosen for analysis because of the predominance in it of long-sustained tones, and numerous phonographic records of it available as sung by famous artists.

The apparatus used by me at the State University of Iowa, consisted principally of the Seashore tonoscope. The tonoscope works on the principle of moving pictures, technically known as stroboscopic vision. The machine converts sound vibrations into pictures on a screen. This screen has eighteen thousand and ninety-five holes so placed that, when acted upon by a sensitive flame, they arrange themselves in characteristic figures for every possible pitch within the range of the human voice. Each figure points to a number on the screen which indicates the pitch. The holes are arranged into one hundred and ten rows, the first having one hundred and ten holes, the third, one hundred and eleven holes, and so on, each successive alternate row having one more hole than the preceding one, up to the last, which has two hundred and nineteen holes. When a tone is sounded the row which has the hole frequency that corresponds to the vibration frequency of the tone will stand still, while all other rows move and tend to blur. The row that stands still, or nearly still, therefore points to a number on the scale which designates the pitch of the tone. The tonoscope thus produces for the eye a picture of the vibrations of a tone, a picture which reveals details of pitch faithfully and far more finely than the ear can hear, thus affording a most sensitive, objective measurement of pitch. Every pitch movement of the voice is pictured on the screen, and the observer can tell at the very moment a tone is produced what error is involved, even down to a small fraction of a vibration.

## I

## PITCH INTONATION

Under the general term "pitch" the following specific items were studied for each tone of the composition:

1. *Attack*: how a tone is attacked when preceded by (a) a higher tone, (b) a lower tone, (c) a rest, (d) when the sung tone is of long duration, and (e) when it is of short duration.

2. *Release*: how a tone is released when succeeded by (a) a higher tone, (b) a lower tone, (c) a rest, (d) when the sung tone is of long duration, and (e) when it is of short duration.

3. *Predominant pitch*: if the tone undergoes several pitch changes while sustained, on which one of the several pitches is it mostly held, and what is the number and extent of the deviations above and below this predominant pitch?

4. *Vowel*: the effect of the vowel on which the tone is sung on the pitch of the tone.

5. *Tonal movement*: how the singer moves from tone to tone, whether by glides or leaps, and to what degree. Thus, in the case of a glide, the movement may be heavy and slow, the voice dwelling upon every vibration intervening between the two tones, or it may be light and quick so as hardly to be perceptible to even the most acute ear.

6. *The crescendo*: the effect of a rise in the intensity of the tone upon its pitch.

7. *Successive predominant pitches*: when the same tone is sung several times in the course of the composition, how do the predominant pitches of the tone in the successive repetitions compare with one another?

8. *Deviations*: how the deviations above and below the predominant pitch compare with one another in number and extent in a given tone.

Fig. 2 shows graphically the result of the measurement on Intonation for the five singers. Each singer is represented by two graphs, one graph showing individual tones (the same tone as it is sung three different times throughout the composition, and the other graph showing a type indicative of the general characteristics of the singer. Finally, at the bottom, a graph showing a norm tone for all the singers is given. In each case the graph shows the nine pitch items defined above.

A description of the items represented in the figure for one tone for one singer may aid the reader to better interpret the graphic representation of the results, as printed on p. 290.

The numbers at the left indicate pitch in terms of vibrations (d. v'). Thus, the number 648 means a tone of that number of vibrations per



second, or tone  $e''$ , fourth space of the treble clef. This tone, however, may be of frequencies differing from each other within several vibrations, the exact number of vibrations depending upon the pitch in which the instrument is tuned. Thus, in the "Ave Maria," the pitch of  $e''$  varies slightly for the five singers, although the composition is sung in each case in the key of G, because the tone g, on the pianos accompanying the singers, varies within a few vibrations by different tunings. Thus, for M,  $g'$  is 393 d. v., D, 390 d. v., G, 398 d. v., A, 394 d. v., E, 390 d. v. This difference in the key tone of the piano is indicated in the graph for  $e''$  by the heavy horizontal line in column I; being 655 d. v. for M, 656 d. v. for A, 664 d. v. for G, 650 d. v. for E, and 650 d. v. for D. Further, since a tone produced by the human voice is not steady but rises and falls slightly in pitch it was necessary to indicate the frequency, form and extent of this variation. The former is represented by the irregularly waving line and the latter by the numbers at the left. The interval from one number to the other, or from one square to the other, vertically, indicates  $1/10$  of a tone.

The duration of the tone is represented horizontally, each square indicating  $1/2$  of a second.

We are now ready to follow the course of a single tone on the graph. We shall take the tone represented by the solid line in Singer D.

The true pitch of that tone, as obtained from the piano, is 650 d. v., as indicated in column I. If this tone were sustained by D throughout on the same pitch, and sung exactly on true pitch, it would appear on the graph as a straight line on the level with the line in column I. In the case of the tone under examination we see that it begins at about 648 d. v., then rises in the first  $1/2$  second of its duration to about 656 d. v., or almost  $1/10$  of a tone, by the next  $1/2$  second it drops to 651 d. v., and rises again to 665 d. v., approximately  $1/5$  of a tone from the beginning of the attack, there it stays for a little over  $1 1/5$  seconds, and then it gradually drops to 644 d. v., where it ends, thus having described a fluctuation within a range of  $1/4$  of a tone.

The same tone sung in two other parts of the selection is registered in the same manner in the other two lines.

The average extent of the glide in the attack for every time this tone occurs in the selection is shown by the height of the slanting line in column J. Thus, for Singer D, we see that, as compared with the standard pitch in I, she attacks the tone about  $1/10$  low, ends the attack about  $1/30$  sharp (column K), releases her tones from  $12/100$  to  $3/100$  of a tone high (column L), the average extent of the fluctuations that take place in her tones above and below the predominant pitch, as well as the standard pitch (column M), the largest pitch changes that occur above and below the predominant pitch as well as the standard pitch (column N), and finally we see that she has a marked tendency to raise the pitch when a crescendo takes place (column O).

At the bottom of Fig. 2 a norm tone is recorded. This was obtained from the average of all the tones in the composition for each of the singers for the items shown.

We see in Fig. 2 that in terms of the standard pitch (column A) the singers initiate a tone  $1/10$  of a tone low when the sung tone is preceded either by a rest or a tone of lower pitch (column B). The attack,

when the preceding tone is above the sung tone, is clean (column B). In terms of the standard pitch the singers sing sharp about  $1/25$  of a tone (column C). The tone is released sharp, about  $1/30$  of a tone in terms of the predominant pitch, and about  $1/15$  of a tone in terms of the standard pitch (column D). The extent of the average deviations above and below the predominant pitch is about the same,  $1/30$  of a tone (column E), while the extent of the maximum deviations above and below the predominant pitch is  $3/40$  and  $1/12$  of a tone respectively (column F).

The record of the effect of the vowel on the pitch of the tone, shown in columns I-N, is based upon the data obtained from the averages of the predominant pitches of three tones, namely, *c''*, *d''*, *e''*, for the following number of cases: *i*, 28 times; *a*, 26 times; *e*, 18 times; *o*, 12 times; *u*, 6 times.

#### DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF RESULTS ON INTONATION

##### A. Individual Characteristics

*Singer D.*—1. The low attack predominates, and is of large extent. The tone is never attacked high, irrespective of the position of the preceding tone.

2. The release is predominantly above, and is of comparatively large extent.

3. A predominant tone is slightly present, the fluctuations being large in extent and numerous, with the deviations above the predominant tone outnumbering those below the predominant tone.

4. The effect of the vowel on the pitch of the tone is erratic.

5. A pitch rise in the crescendo is almost always present.

6. The tonal movement is a marked portamento.

7. The deviations from each other of the predominant pitches for the same tone are marked and numerous. Thus, the tone *d''*, sung twelve times, occurs on five different pitches within the range 545-573 d. v.

8. A tendency to sing sharp, in terms of the predominant pitch, is manifest.

9. In both pure and tempered intonation D sings sharp.

*Singer G.*—1. When the tone is sung after a rest or after an inspiration, or is approached from an interval more than a major second below, it is invariably initiated on a pitch somewhat below the desired tone, the extent of the error in attack depending on the distance, below, of the preceding tone. The low attack is most marked in extent when the tone is preceded by a rest, and is also more marked in a tone of long duration than in one of shorter duration. When the preceding tone is above, the attack is invariably clean.

2. The release is predominantly high, irrespective of the succeeding tone, and is of marked extent.

3. The aperiodic fluctuations in the tone are few, of small extent, and more numerous above than below the predominant pitch. A predominant pitch is present to a marked degree, and is continuous rather than intermittent.

4. There is a tendency for the vowels *i*, *a*, *e*, to be sung higher than *o* and *u*.

5. The movement from tone to tone is mostly in the form of glides (*portamento*).

6. In the crescendo tone there is invariably a rise in pitch of marked extent.

7. The deviations from each other of the predominant pitches for the same tone, as sung in successive occurrence, are very small in extent and few in number.

8. The maximum deviation below the predominant pitch is greater than the maximum deviation above, but the general tendency is to sing sharp in terms of the predominant tone.

9. In both pure and tempered intonation *G* sings sharp.

*Singer M.*—1. The low attack is almost constantly present and is of large extent.

2. The release is unusually clean.

3. A predominant tone is conspicuously present, the fluctuations are very few and of small extent, with the departures above and below the predominant tone about evenly divided in number.

4. Vowel *e* is sung higher than the other vowels, *i* and *a* next, and *o* and *u* lowest.

5. The tonal movement is very smooth and legato.

6. There is rarely a rise in pitch on the crescendo, and when it does occur it is of small extent.

7. The deviations from each other of the predominant pitches for the same tone are small in number and extent.

8. The tendency to sing above or below the predominant pitch is very slight.

9. In both pure and tempered intonation *M* sings sharp.

*Singer A.*—1. The low attack predominates, but is of comparatively small extent. The attack from above is clean irrespective of the position of the preceding tone.

2. The presence of a predominant tone level is not marked, and is intermittent, while the fluctuations are numerous and of

large extent, being about evenly divided in number above and below the predominant pitch.

3. The high release is almost constantly present, and is of large extent.

4. The vowel tendency is erratic.

5. The portamento tonal movement is markedly present.

6. A pitch rise in the crescendo is not very frequent but of large extent when present.

7. The deviations from each other of the predominant pitches for the same tone in successive repetitions are very numerous and are of large extent. Thus, out of twelve repetitions, the tone d'' is sung on nine different pitches within a range of from 565-589 d. v., and the tone e'', out of eleven repetitions, is sung on seven different pitches within the range 639-659 d. v.

8. The maximum deviation below is larger than that above the predominant pitch, but the general tendency is to sing sharp in terms of the predominant tone.

9. In both pure and tempered intonation A sings flat.

*Singer E.*—1. The attack as a whole is clean, excepting after a rest, in which case it is initiated markedly low. A high attack occurs once and is of very small extent.

2. The release is mostly clean, but when a deviation does occur there is a slight rise.

3. The presence of a predominant tone is unusually marked and continuous, the fluctuations being few, but of large extent, the deviations above outnumbering those below.

4. No constant vowel tendency is present.

5. The tonal movement is a slight portamento.

6. No pitch rise in the crescendo is noticed.

7. The deviations from each other of the predominant pitches for the same tone in successive repetitions are large in extent but few in number.

8. The tendency to sing off pitch in terms of the predominant tone is very marked.

9. In both pure and tempered intonation E sings sharp.

## B. General Conclusions

1. A tone is almost invariably attacked below the pitch intended when it is preceded by a lower tone, and in the majority of cases it is released above. The size in the error of attack depends on the distance below of the preceding tone, the greater the distance, the greater the error. The largest error occurs when

the tone is sung after a rest. The size of the error also depends on the duration of the tone, the longer the duration the larger the error. When the preceding tone is above the tone sung, the attack is clean. The high release is independent of the succeeding tone.

The cause for the low attack may lie in the fact that a time interval elapses before the intensity of breath pressure requisite for the production of a tone of a certain pitch is fully established. In other words, the singer does not immediately, on striking a tone, set up a tension in the cords adequate for the production of the desired pitch. Though this swooping up to a tone is no doubt at times intentional, particularly under great emotional stress, it is evident from its universality that the phenomenon is to a certain extent beyond the singer's control.

The high release may be due to an attempt on the part of the singer to maintain a steady pitch to the very end of the tone, with the result that with the waning of the breath the final effort is somewhat over-reached.

2. A tone is very rarely sustained on the same pitch for an interval of time beyond half a second, the number and the extent of the deviations depending on the individual characteristics of the singer.

3. Two tones of the same pitch and of equal duration are never sung twice the same way, varying in the number and the extent of the fluctuations as well as in the pitch of the predominant tones.

4. The vowel seems to have but an insignificant effect on the pitch of the tone, though a slight tendency is present to sing the vowel *e* highest, *a* and *i* next, and *o* and *u* lowest.

5. The five singers are divisible into three classes in the matter of tonal steadiness and the number and extent of the fluctuations, as follows: M and G having the steadiest voices with the fewest and smallest fluctuations, E having a steady tone with few fluctuations but of marked extent when they occur, while A and D manifest unsteady tones with fluctuations large in number and extent.

6. The movement from tone to tone is predominantly in the form of glides, but varying in degree for the different singers, being heavier for some than for others.

7. A tendency for a rise in pitch with a rise in intensity is manifest throughout.

8. There exists a tendency for all the singers to sing sharp in the sense that the deviations above the predominant tone are

more numerous than those below, but the maximum deviations below the predominant tone are always larger than those above.

9. The singers sing in neither pure nor tempered intonation, but slightly sharp in respect to both.

## II

### THE VIBRATO

No experimental data either on the nature or the significance of the vibrato in singing is available, a strange fact in view of the prominence of this phenomenon in every voice manifesting a singing quality. Even the little speculative literature in existence on the subject is, to say the least, confusing and contradictory. Recently Mr. Thomas Edison was quoted in an interview to the effect that out of approximately 3800 records of singers examined in his laboratory there were but 22 who sang what he calls pure tones,

without extraneous sounds and the almost universal tremolo effect. . . . Most singers can not sustain a note without breaking it up into a series of chatterings or tremolos. The number of waves varies from two per second to as high as twelve. When at the latter rate the chatter can just be heard and is not very objectionable. If this defect could be eliminated, nothing would exceed the beauty of the human voice, but, until this is done, there will be only a few singers in a century who can emit pure notes in all registers.

Some representative expressions of opinion on this vocal manifestation from singers and voice teachers is given below:

"This vibration in the voice should not be confused with the tremolo which is, of course, very undesirable. A voice without vibrato would be cold and dead, expressionless. There must be this pulsing quality in the tone, which carries waves of feeling on it."

"It is scarcely necessary to describe the tremolo. Five out of every six modern singers are afflicted with it, and consequently there is a great deal of make-believe that the tremolo is a splendid vehicle for the expression of sentiment and passion. . . . It may be pointed out that all great singers preserve their voices much longer than the average artists, and while the latter usually show the tremolo, the former invariably never do."

"There is a desirable vibration or pulse which should be in every tone and which gives it life. This the old Italians called the vibrato; it is quite different from the tremolo. The vibrato is the natural pulse



or rhythmic vibration of the tone, and in the attempt to keep the voice steady this must not be lost; any control which prevents this natural vibrato or life-pulse from entering the tone is as bad, though not so obvious, as the tremolo itself."

"The vibrato is a rhythmic pulsation of the voice. It often appears in untrained voices; in others it appears during the process of cultivation. Some have thought it the perfection of sympathetic quality; others deem it a fault.—The vibrato is caused by an undulating variation of pitch or power, often both. The voice does not hold steadily and strictly to the pitch, and according to the amount of the variation a corresponding vibrato, or tremolo, is produced.—The action of stringed instruments illustrates this statement. The finger of the violinist vibrates on the string by rocking rapidly back and forth and the vibrato is the result.—The same holds true of the human instrument. By variation of the tension, the vocal apparatus sends forth several tones in alternation, of a slightly different pitch, which together produce the effect.—Three sources are ascribed for the vibrato; one is a rapid, spasmodic vibration of the diaphragm causing variation of breath pressure; another is the alternate tension and relaxation of the larynx and vocal cords; a third is that commonest of faults: throat stiffness. Either cause is possible, and variation in the pitch or intensity of the tone is the result. Sufficient investigations have not been made to make the matter certain, but tremolo, trembling of the vocal organs, and muscular stiffness, or unnatural tension, seem to go together.—It is quite possible in the early stages of culture so to train the voice as to use the vibrato or not at all at will, but if not early controlled, this, like other bad habits, gains the mastery. Excessive vibrato has spoiled many good voices. It is not a fundamental quality of the voice. A little vibrato may occasionally be desirable when properly and skillfully used; more than this is to be shunned as a dangerous vice."

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VIBRATO

For the purpose of determining the significance of the vibrato in vocal expression the voices of twenty persons were studied, ranging in age from fourteen years to middle age, and in vocal ability from the monotone to a celebrated concert-artist. These observers were divided into four classes, as follows: (1) the monotone; (2) untrained, non-musical voices; (3) untrained, musical voices; (4) trained, musical voices. A careful study of these classes of voices on the tonoscope with regard to the vibrato yielded the following results:

1. The monotone: To the ear the voice sounds dull, hard and strident. On the tonoscope the tone of the monotone registers almost rigid, non-fluctuating.

2. The untrained, non-musical voice: The tone sounds dull, but not as hard and strident as in the monotone. The tonoscope shows the tone from this voice to fluctuate irregularly above and below a predominant pitch within two to four vibrations.

3. The untrained, musical voice: The tone sounds bright in comparison with those in (1) and (2), and a slight pulsation is clearly heard. The pulsation has a marked periodicity of about 6 pulsations per second. Only in the case of one singer did the rate of the pulsation reach 13 per second. When observed on the tonoscope the following phenomena are seen to take place in this type of voice: (1) a progressive fluctuation in pitch above and below a predominant pitch, and (2) a periodic rise and fall in pitch ranging in extent from six to twelve vibrations, and synchronous with the audible pulsations. Not every tone sung, however, shows the periodic pulsation. But, whenever a pulsation is heard, the periodic fluctuation is also invariably present.

4. The trained, musical voice: For this voice the observations reported for class (3) hold, with the addition that both the pulsations and the pitch fluctuations are more markedly present.

*To summarize.*—(1) In the musical tone of both trained and untrained voices a periodic pulsation is heard. (2) The rate of the pulsation is about 6 per second. (3) When the pulsating tone is registered on the tonoscope it is seen to undergo a periodic pitch fluctuation of from six to twelve vibrations in extent. (4) This pitch fluctuation is synchronous with the audible pulsations. (5) The periodic pitch fluctuations appear above, and in addition to, an irregular fluctuation. (6) When the singer was told to control the pulsation in the voice, that is, to try to eliminate it, she could do so only for a fraction of a second, and reported that it was very difficult to sing a tone under such conditions.

We conclude from these observations that the vibrato is a basic, fundamental, attribute of an effective singing voice.

#### MEASUREMENT OF THE VIBRATO IN GREAT SINGERS

The graphs in Fig. 1 show the range of the vibrato for pitch and intensity for the five singers for characteristic individual tones for the highest, middle, and lowest ranges of the composition, namely,  $b''$ ,  $d''$ , and  $f\sharp'$ . To the right of the individual tone a norm for the pitch extent of the vibrato for that range is shown. The pitch extent is given in terms of vibrations and part of a whole tone, each square representing  $1/10$  of a tone, and the intensity in terms of millimeters, each square being equal to 1 mm. The absolute intensity of the tone is indicated and also the extent to which there is an intensity fluctuation. The time element is represented horizontally, each square measuring  $1/6$  of a second. The vibrato pulsations are represented as equal ( $1/6$  sec.) because this rate is so nearly uniform that variation in successive waves in different tones and for different singers did not seem to be significant.

An interpretation of the graphic representation in Fig. 1 of the pitch and intensity undulations for one tone follows:

The tone is the third one counting from left to right, for Singer G.

The tone begins at 375 d. v., and during the first  $1/6$  of a second rises to about 382 d. v., and drops back to 375 d. v., having described

a wave  $1/5$  of a tone in extent. During the next  $1/6$  of a second the tone describes a wave from 375 d. v., to 381 d. v., and back to 375 d. v., while during the third  $1/6$  of a second the first wave is repeated. In the fourth time interval the tone rises from 375 d. v., to 376 d. v., with an undulation to 382 d. v., while in the next time interval the tone drops back to 375 d. v., and the first wave recurs twice. During the eighth interval the tone rises to 368 d. v., and we see the vibrato diminishing in extent till the tone ends on 374 d. v.

As compared with the standard pitch shown by the dotted line we see that the tone is sung slightly sharp, if the lower limit of the fluctuations is considered the pitch of the tone.

The average extent of the vibrato at the low range of the voice is slightly over  $1/5$  of a tone, as indicated by the heavy vertical line to the right.

In the lower curve we see the intensity oscillations of the same tone, with the maximum intensity of that tone represented by the heavy vertical line to the right. In the case of this tone we note that not only are the intensity changes coördinated with the changes in time and extent, but that the intensity oscillation is so marked that the tone practically dies out for each vibrato pulsation.

#### INDIVIDUAL MANIFESTATION OF THE VIBRATO IN THE FIVE SINGERS

M.—The vibrato is constantly present in every tone with an average amplitude of 10 vibrations. The voice has a marked uniformity and constancy of timbre and pitch throughout the entire range of the composition.

G.—The vibrato is constantly present in every tone with an average extent of 13 vibrations. Its presence is most marked in the middle and low ranges, and least in the highest ranges of the composition.

E.—The vibrato is intermittent, being present in some tones and absent from others, as well as present in one part of a tone and not in another part. When the latter case occurs the tone usually begins without the vibrato and ends with the vibrato present. The average range is 6 vibrations. The voice as a whole, as well as in single tones, lacks uniformity of timbre. The vibrato is mostly absent from the highest tones of the voice.

A.—The vibrato is present in every tone but is intermittent. It has an average extent of 8 vibrations, but is quite variable in the same tone. This gives the tone an effect of constantly changing timbre.

D.—The tone almost invariably begins minus the vibrato and ends with the vibrato. The effect on the ear is that of a tone beginning with one timbre and ending on another. The average amplitude of the vibrato is 16 vibrations.

#### THE PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THE VIBRATO

It is well known that the nervous discharge accompanying feeling of any kind is both diffused and restricted. The diffused

discharge serves as a measure of the intensity of the emotion and its effect on the muscles is in an inverse ratio to their size and the weights of the parts to which they are attached. It thus happens that a feeble wave of nervous excitement will manifest itself most in that muscle or muscles where it meets with least resistance. Thus, in man it will act first on the delicate muscles of the voice and the small facial muscles, and then the arms, legs, and the trunk. In the restricted discharge we are dealing with the production of a special effect, due, in the words of Spencer, "to the relations established in the course of evolution between particular feelings and particular sets of muscles habitually brought into play for the satisfaction of them, and partly due to kindred relations between the muscular actions and the conscious motives existing at the moment." It seems, then, that while every emotion will have a general effect on the entire musculature of the organism, its effect is marked particularly upon one set of muscles, the specific set affected depending on the nature and quality of the emotion.

Let us now inquire into the nature of muscular discharge under particular conditions.

In 1904 Gordon Holmes published an account of certain tremors in organic cerebral lesions. His observations are of peculiar interest in relation to the vibrato. Holmes defines tremor as "consisting in an involuntary oscillation of any part of the body around any plane, such oscillation being either regular or irregular in rate and in amplitude, and due to the alternate action of groups of muscles and their antagonists." In summarizing his observations on seven cases of tremor the author states:

The tremor consists in a series of involuntary oscillations of any part of a limb, due to the alternate contractions of one group of muscles and its antagonists, of slow rate, varying in rapidity from 3 to 5 oscillations per second, in all cases more or less regular in rate, while limited to any one group of muscles, in some cases absolutely so; generally coarse, e. g., of large amplitude; with a periodical rhythmical increase and decrease of the range, or irregular.

In no case did it persist during sleep . . . it also ceased when the limb lay at complete rest, so supported that each segment of its segments was individually supported. In each case the influence of gravity on its production and existence was emphasized; any part of the limb allowed to hang unsupported was in some cases invariably, in all cases frequently, affected by tremor. This would seem to point to a certain condition of tone of the muscle being essential to, or at least concerned in, its pathogenesis. . . .

In each case, too, it was observed that the psychical state exerted considerable influence on the intensity and character of the tremor; it always increased with any agitation or excitement of the patient, and diminished as the patient again became composed and calm.

Summarizing these facts in their bearing upon the vibrato of the singer it is evident that the vibrato is a phenomenon in every respect similar to the tremor here described. The tremor is of constant rate but varies in amplitude, so is the vibrato; the tremor is beyond the control of the patient, so is the vibrato; it occurs only when the muscle is under slight strain, so does the vibrato; it is about half the rate of normal muscular discharge, so is the vibrato.

We may then summarize the foregoing facts in their bearing upon the vibrato as follows:

Singing is essentially an emotional act, involving the neuro-muscular mechanism as a whole, but affecting particularly the muscle or muscles functionally connected with this specific type of emotional expression, the whole act involving the usual type of muscular response to stimulation characteristic of skeletal muscle. Further, that the neuro-muscular apparatus of the singer is peculiar in kind in that, to a certain extent, it manifests those phenomena of muscle pathology found in the tremor, in that the vocal muscle, under tension, responds with a rhythm of muscular discharge at a rate half of that found in the normal state, and that this tremor is manifested particularly in that organ which is functionally connected with vocal emotional expression, the larynx.

It now remains for us to more specifically ascertain the seat of the vibrato, whether the pulsation is essentially a pitch fluctuation and therefore has its seat in the larynx, or whether it is essentially an intensity fluctuation located in the resonance mechanism. Some facts concerning the anatomy and physiology of the larynx will yield a plausible theory.

The larynx is the vibrating organ of the voice. It is situated at the base of the tongue, and is so closely connected with it by attachment to the hyoid bone to which the tongue is also attached that it is capable only of slight movement independent of that organ; consequently it must move with the tongue in articulation.

Two types of movement of the larynx have been experimentally determined; movements of its single parts towards each other, and shifts of the larynx as a whole. What is significant for our purpose here is that fact that the larynx is not stationary in phonation, but that its position shifts with a change in pitch,

or, what is the same, that a change in larynx position means a change in the pitch of the sound. Taking this fact into account, plus the anatomical and physiological facts already mentioned, namely, (1) the anatomical relation between tongue and larynx, (2) the pitch-intensity nature of the vibrato, (3) the emotional nature of the act of singing, (4) the action of muscle under emotional stress, we may conclude that the muscle or muscles holding the larynx in suspension during the emission of a tone undulate periodically in a manner similar to the tremor, this undulation causing the small pitch changes observed in the tone, while the coördinated movements of the tongue bring about the periodic change in the resonance box and cause the synchronous intensity changes.

The foregoing facts point to the conclusion that the vibrato is due to a neuro-muscular condition that characterizes the singing organism, and that its specific seat is in the muscle or muscles that control the movements of the larynx in phonation.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. The vibrato is a fundamental, basic, attribute of the aesthetically effective singing voice in that it is a medium for the conveyance of emotion in vocal expression.

2. The vibrato is a manifestation of the general neuro-muscular condition that characterizes the singing organism.

3. The psychological effect of the vibrato is probably due to the fact that the human ear, because of the behavior of muscle under emotional stress, has come to associate a trembling with emotional experiences.

4. The voice that possesses the most constant vibrato, constant in its presence in the tones throughout the range of the singer's voice, and of an amplitude and an intensity not obtrusive to the ear, but of sufficient intensity to be easily audible, has the most effect on the hearer, provided the other factors that enter into artistic singing are present.

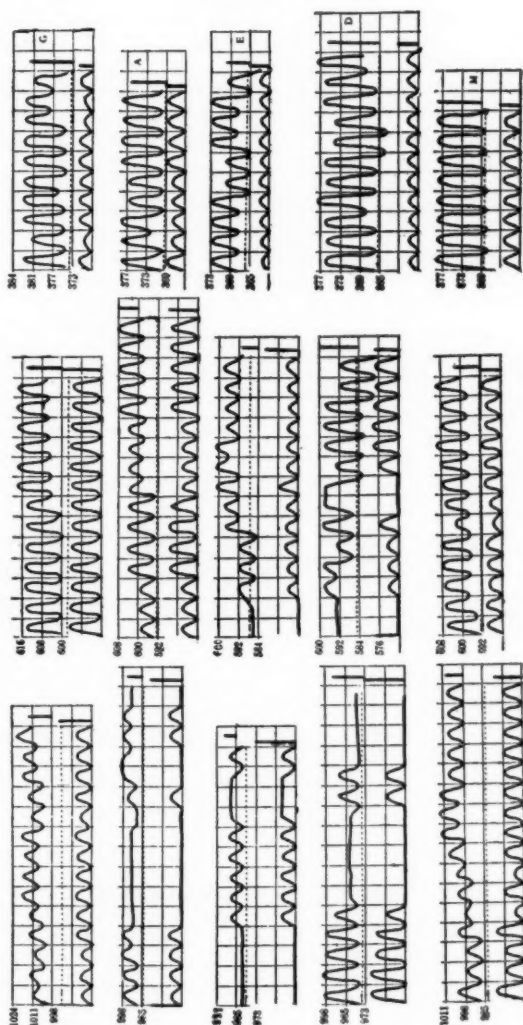
5. The vibrato is a pitch-intensity fluctuating phenomenon.

6. The rate of the vibrato is relatively constant, of approximately six pulsations per second, with an average amplitude of eleven vibrations for the five singers here studied.

7. The intensity fluctuations are synchronous with the pitch fluctuations wave by wave for both rate and extent, the average intensity amplitude for the five singers being 13 mm.



FIG. 1  
VIBRATO



Each singer is represented by three tones (from left to right), the first one from the high range of the selection (b'), the second from the middle range (d''), the third from the low range (f#).

The capital letter at the right indicates the singer.

For each tone the upper curve indicates the extent, form and pitch of the pitch changes in the vibrato in terms of  $1/10$  of a tone. The heavy vertical line to the right of each upper curve represents the average extent of the vibrato as obtained for the three highest tones for each range, namely,  $g''$ ,  $a''$ ,  $b''$  for the highest range;  $b'$ ,  $c'$ ,  $d''$  for the middle range;  $e'$ ,  $f\sharp'$ ,  $g'$  for the low range.

The lower curve shows the synchronous intensity deflections of the tone, measured in terms of galvanometer deflections at a distance of one meter. The heavy vertical line to the right of the curve indicates the absolute intensity of that tone.

The dotted line shows the true pitch of the tone in tempered intonation as obtained from the key tone of the piano.

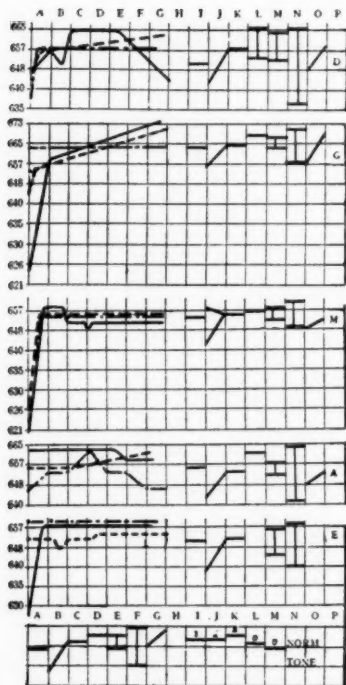
The numbers at the left designate the pitch in terms of vibrations, each block representing  $1/10$  of a tone.

For intensity each block represents 10 mm.

The horizontal time unit is  $1/6$  of a second.

FIG. 2

## PITCH



The tone  $e''$  as sung three different times by five singers, showing:

- A, attack;
- B-F, how the tone is sustained;
- G, the release;

I, pitch of standard tone as obtained from the piano;

K, pitch of predominant sung tone (average pitch);

L, release above and below;

M, average deviation above and below;

N, maximum deviation above and below;

O, rise of pitch in crescendo;

P, initial of singer.

## NORM TONE

A, standard pitch;

B, attack;

C, pitch of sung tone;

D, release;

E, average deviation above and below;

F, maximum deviation above and below;

G, rise of pitch in crescendo;

I-M, effect of vowel on pitch.

## LAWRANCE COLLINGWOOD

By CEDRIC H. GLOVER

**A**MONG the more remarkable features of the present musical Renaissance in Great Britain are the diversity of talents and striking individuality displayed by the composers who severally constitute it. This happy result is perhaps in some measure due to the fact that no outstanding genius has yet succeeded in dominating the field; there has been no César Franck, no Brahms, no Verdi to serve as the nucleus for a school of composers and, further, the rather detached personality of the Englishman of to-day does not take kindly to the hero worship of the "maestro" which is a necessary precedent in the formation of a tradition such as existed in the Leipzig Conservatory or the Schola Cantorum. England has, therefore, been spared the flood of minor imitators which has choked the sources of inspiration in other countries. It is indeed a matter of speculation whether any common basis of style or thought is anywhere discoverable: certain affinities between individuals no doubt exist, especially among the older generation of composers, but generally speaking, it is impossible to distinguish anything in the work of the British composers as a whole, which they share together and which distinguishes them as a body from their fellow composers elsewhere. There are, it is true, no specifically Teutonic qualities apparent in the work of the so-called Viennese school of composers, when considered individually, but collectively, when contrasted with the composers of other schools and countries, they are seen to possess a common connecting link which justifies the generic title. In the case of the British composers no synthesis is possible, so divergent are their methods and practice. People have tried to distil something peculiarly British from the work of Parry, Elgar and Vaughan-Williams, three composers who in themselves undeniably display the ordinary characteristics of their fellow-countrymen, in so far as such characteristics exist apart from the comic papers, but the results are nugatory and purely fanciful. However British the composers themselves, their music contains no common attributes. Truly the range of experience of these composers during the past forty years is enormous: from Delius to Lord Berners, from Stanford to Arnold

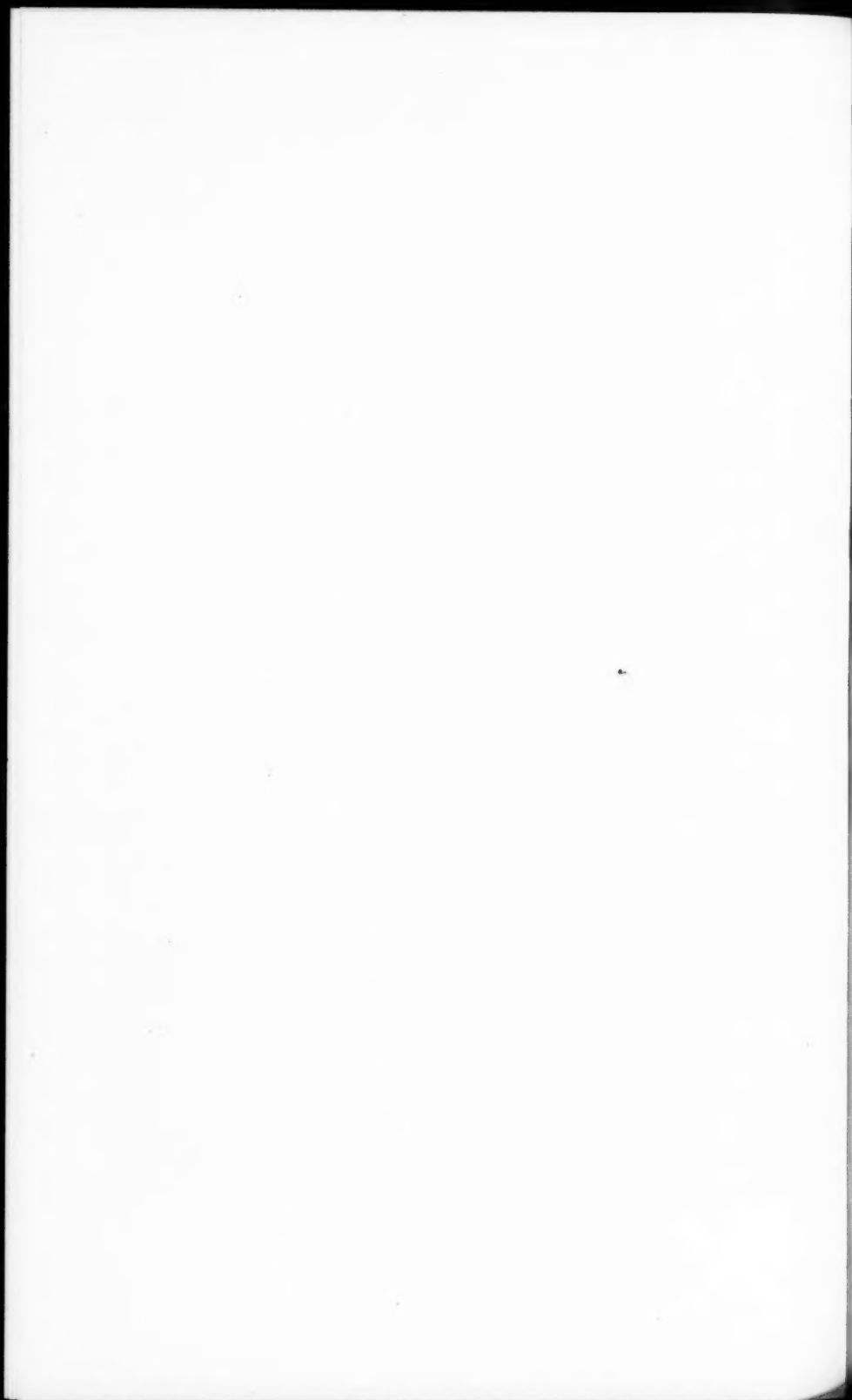
Bax, the British school can supply the composer for every mood and to suit every taste. Far from exhibiting national traits, the British composers of to-day might with some justification be accused of cosmopolitanism; without any sacrifice of individuality, they seem to reflect the many and diverse influences which are directing music in contemporary Europe; in fact, British music to-day is to a greater extent an epitome of the musical consciousness of the age than the music of any other country.

Among the composers of the youngest or third generation of this musical Renaissance, Lawrance Collingwood must be accounted one of the most interesting and most promising. He has been spared the precocious maturity of some of his contemporaries which has already resulted in a disappointing sterility. His genius has progressed slowly and normally and the various stages of its advance are clearly marked, each work profiting by the experience of its predecessor. He has already passed beyond his imitative apprenticeship into a middle period in which, assured of mastery over the mediums which he employs, he is able to give full rein to his creative imagination. He is, therefore, just beyond the most critical phase of a composer's career, where so many break down, and, having acquired the necessary technical equipment in their pupilage, can offer nothing beyond a bland efficiency, destitute of all ideas.

Born in London in 1887, he received his early education in the Westminster Abbey Choir School and his first musical experience as a chorister in the Abbey itself. His talents were soon recognised and he became an organ pupil under Sir Frederick Bridge, the Abbey organist, and latterly received instruction at the Guildhall School of Music in composition and pianoforte from Mr. Arthur Barclay, these early studies culminating in the licentiate-ship at the Royal Academy of Music. Collingwood, after gaining further experience as organist in a London church, in 1908 won the organ scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford, and acted as organist and choirmaster in the College for four years. While at Oxford, he passed the examinations for the degree of Bachelor of Music, though he has never proceeded to the degree. We have one pianoforte piece, written during the composer's adolescence, a little "Romance" published long after by Jurgenson of Moscow, and bearing the date 1909. It is not a work of any special distinction or individuality, and contains no more promise than such student works normally display, its chief virtues being perhaps a certain shapeliness in form and a distinct boldness in modulation.



Lawrance Collingwood





During the summer vacation of 1909, Collingwood went to Russia and the visit proved a momentous event in his career. He returned to Oxford laden with the works of Russian composers, and in particular Scriabin and Medtner, who were almost unknown, even by name, in England at that time. The concerts, which Collingwood organized at the University Musical Union after his visit to Russia, introduced a new current into the tranquil waters of Oxford music. In one such concert, for instance, we find the sixth Glazounoff Symphony arranged for four hands and songs by Medtner, Glière, Arensky and Rachmaninoff: in another at the University Musical Club we find Collingwood set down in the programme to play the pianoforte part in the second "Poème" of Catoire for violin and pianoforte—a work wholly unknown in England in 1911, which he had suggested to the Committee for performance. He succeeded in communicating his special enthusiasm to a small circle of fellow undergraduates, aided by the catholicity of his own taste, which at once put him in sympathy with those who were musically less mature. Being an admirable pianist and a splendid sight-reader, Collingwood played a large part in those chamber-music parties, which are the most essential constituent of a flourishing University musical life, and he represented the University Musical Union, on several occasions, during the annual visit to the fellow society at Cambridge. So far as creative work is concerned the Oxford period was one of preparation and the cultivation of a real musical discrimination; the normal life of the University does not foster an atmosphere for composition, but the general culture, however superficial, with which it endows its children, is of considerable benefit to the specialized intellect of the creative artist.

Two Preludes, subsequently published by Jurgenson, date from 1909. They show a tremendous advance on the little "Romance." The first is a clever exploitation of a single musical idea, rather in the manner of early Scriabin, but showing a tendency to harmonic complexity and a real grasp of the musical material which is in both pieces subjected to harmonic rather than rhythmic variation. The second piece is an experiment in dissonances and suffers a little from slightness of thematic content and a certain rhythmic monotony. Four songs to words by Ernest Dowson were composed during this same period; the three Love Songs were published by Enoch in 1920, and "Oh! I would live in a dairy" by Curwen in the following year. Two of these songs, "A land of Silence" and "Oh! I would live in a dairy," figure in the programme of the summer concert at Exeter College in 1911.

They are slight in character, but very deftly fashioned, and display many tokens of that dramatic instinct which is so notable a feature in the composer's mature work: the music amply responds to the stimulus of any verbal suggestions in the text and the diverse mood of each poem is, therefore, faithfully mirrored in its setting; there is, too, a pleasing absence of sentimentality, which is not so apparent in the poems themselves. The pianoforte plays an equal part with the voice and the proper balance between them is always maintained; the instrument is consequently allotted its full share of the climaxes, that in the second of the Love Songs being particularly effective. It is difficult to single out any one of the four for particular commendation; some will prefer the tenderness of "Little Lady of my Heart"; others the bright jolliness of "Oh! I would live in a dairy," where an element of sophisticated rusticity is conveyed by the modal flavour of the tune.

After leaving Oxford in 1912 Collingwood went to Petrograd to study at the Conservatoire, his masters being Glazounoff, Steinberg, Tcherepnin and Wihtol. He graduated in 1915, but continued his studies until 1917. In 1914 several of his early works appeared in print, namely the pianoforte pieces already discussed, a pianoforte sonata and a piece called "Impression Languide," all published by Jurgenson. The sonata was begun in Oxford as far back as 1911 and only completed in 1913 in Petrograd. It is a long work in four movements, very uneven, but by no means devoid of interest, though the themes are too squarely constructed to lend themselves to development and the writing throughout is rather turgid. The second movement is charming and especially so the limpid first subject which seems to flow along the more serenely after the "verbosity" of the preceding movement; this theme recurs in the last movement. The "Impression Languide" composed in 1913 is more interesting. It shows to the full how strong was the attraction of the composer to Scriabin at this time, but contains original touches, notably a dramatic climax in the middle section where the genius of the composer asserts itself against the languorous and exotic influence of his model. In 1915 the first sketches of the *Poème Symphonique* and the opera "Macbeth" were made. The former was finished by 1917; the latter has occupied the last ten years of the composer's life and is only now nearing completion.

The *Poème Symphonique* received its first performance in Petrograd under Behrling with the Court Orchestra; it was first heard in London in 1920 and has since received several perform-

ances. In 1919 the composer submitted the score to the Carnegie Trustees, who year by year undertake the publication of the best of the works by British composers submitted to them for adjudication and the work received the distinction of inclusion in the Carnegie Collection of British Music (Stainer and Bell). This work is the most important composition of the composer at present available to the general public; in the light of subsequent achievements it must be considered the work of a transitional period: though it shows an immense advance over anything which the composer had previously written and exhibits a remarkable maturity in style and technical ability, it lacks the terse epigrammatic directness of "Macbeth." It is in every way a characteristic work of the composer and is immediately recognisable as the work of a man whose individuality is no longer hampered by the problems of self-expression. In construction it resembles the so-called "Phantasy"—a peculiarly English form, to which modern British composers are much addicted. After a slow and sombre introduction foreshadowing the principal theme of the Allegro over slowly moving harmonic sequences, the long and extended first subject is reached, which is subjected to very full and elaborate treatment before it gives way to the second subject—the Andante section, which in character resembles the slow movement of a symphony. The theme, which is also foreshadowed in the introduction, is tender and beautiful; with full harmonies and clever orchestration, rich with effective passages for subdivided strings, it creates an altogether different atmosphere from the storm and stress of the music preceding it. A clever development section follows in which fragments of both subjects are bandied about from instrument to instrument, succeeded by a chromatic tune in 6/4 and finally by the recapitulation in which the second subject is still more richly treated with a wealth of rhythmic devices, the whole working up to a big climax and concluding with a brilliant coda based on the two principal themes. It is impossible to do justice to a work of these dimensions by a brief description; opportunities for hearing it performed are unfortunately few and far between, as it demands a large orchestra with six horns and full percussion, and this always militates against frequent performances of a work.

The year 1915 saw the publication by Jurgenson of a second pianoforte sonata, composed in 1913, and a small piece for pianoforte called "Inspiration Joyeuse." The Sonata is a great advance on its predecessor. It is in one movement and similar in form to the "Poème Symphonique" with a slow second subject; the

Scriabinesque element of the early works is largely confined to the directions—"with triumphant ecstasy," "with despair" and the like—the impetuous first subject and the dreamy second subject being both more closely related in style to the themes of the "Poème Symphonique" than to any in the first sonata. The work is well conceived for the instrument, and has received several public performances in recent years in London.

Two other pianoforte sonatas were composed during the sojourn in Russia; neither was published and the manuscripts were lost when the composer escaped from the country after the Revolution. He has, however, reconstructed the scherzo movement of one sonata and it was published in 1920 as an *Étude* (Ascherberg). The movement is in ordinary ternary form with a little coda largely constructed out of the theme of the trio. The first section is wild and stormy, its chief characteristic being a strong bass line with flickering semiquaver passages in the right hand: the trio section is short—a diatonic melody over a flowing bass working up to one tremendous climax and so back again into the first section; the whole movement is in every way a brilliant and effective piece of writing for the instrument.

The tale of Collingwood's published work is complete except for his arrangements of Breton folk-songs in "Songs from Many Lands" (Enoch); these arrangements, which were made in 1922, are models of good taste—simplicity is the predominant feature, but it is the simplicity of great art; the accompaniments are full of beautiful countersubjects and piquant harmonies which serve to bring out more fully the beauty of the tunes; there is none of that horrible sophisticated chromaticism with which certain modern composers seek to envelope the tunes which they are arranging, though in this case the composer is never afraid to introduce chords which would have been unintelligible to the old singers, when the beauty of the tune can be thereby enhanced: the settings of "Dimanche à l'Aube" and "Le Paradis" must be singled out for special praise; the dreamy mysticism of the latter is particularly well reproduced in the music.

After the Revolution, Collingwood escaped with his family to England; he at once put his services at the disposal of the authorities, and being a fluent speaker of Russian, he was sent out as an interpreter to the Russian Expeditionary Force where he remained until the end of the war. After demobilization he settled in London where he has been living ever since with the exception of a winter in Rochester (N. Y.) with Albert Coates.

There are a few completed works awaiting publication, among which are some songs including a fine version of "The Cloths of Heaven" and a beautiful warm setting of "June," both in the composer's latest manner and with elaborate pianoforte accompaniments. During Collingwood's service with the Russian Expeditionary Force he had time to sketch a work for pianoforte and orchestra, which was completed soon after his return. His music is obviously and directly inspired by a sense of the ruin of the Russia he loved; the diatonic character of the fine opening theme over an accompaniment of open chords (with no third) at once suggests the style of an old Russian folk-song.



The pianoforte part is extremely brilliant and makes heavy demands on the performer. The music is strong and vigorous throughout and contains many passages of great beauty: the work ends with a feeling of ultimate triumph after prolonged suspense, suggested by a superimposed tune in F sharp major



over an A major chord, the A major harmony eventually asserting itself



with overwhelming force like the sun bursting through a cloud.

The opera "Macbeth" is nearing completion, and its long deferred appearance is eagerly awaited. Portions of the opera were performed in Petrograd publicly as long ago as 1917 and some of the Macbeth monologues have since been heard in London. The composer has condensed the Shakespearian play into three acts, using of course the dramatist's words throughout. His extraordinary dramatic power is given full scope; the music literally hangs upon the words, heightening the effect and intensifying the climaxes in a manner impossible to the spoken word alone. The murder scene is ten times more horrible:



the witches and their apparitions ten times more hellish. The musical characterization is admirable, as the specimen quoted



will show. This lovely tune, associated with Duncan, is the very embodiment of one who "hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been so clear in his great office." It is premature to assess the value of the work, until it can be considered as a whole; sufficient has, however, been accomplished to justify the assertion that we have in "Macbeth" one of the most original and outstanding of British operas, worthy in its own way to stand beside the other two great Shakespearian operas "Otello" and "Falstaff" and, unlike these, the work of a man who is on the threshold of achievement.



## VIEWS AND REVIEWS

By CARL ENGEL

THE specific connection between the roar of cannon and the appeal of *bel canto* is perhaps not so obvious as is the general relation between music and warfare. But it exists, nevertheless. And one example at least can be cited in proof of it.

Downing Street, on January 4, 1800, had replied to the First Consul's offer of peace in a tone calculated to offend any self-respecting government. There was no further use for pen and parchment. It was decided, in Paris, to write the answer with the sword of France upon the map of Europe; and Lombardy was the particular corner of that much-revised document to be distinguished by the consular paraph. Less than forty-eight hours after the receipt of Lord Grenville's pompous and insolent note, the machinery was set in motion for one of history's boldest campaigns. Among the many thousands caught in the wheels of these preparations and destined to follow Bonaparte across the Great St. Bernard into the plains of Italy, was a youngster barely seventeen, Marie Henri Beyle by name—known later as the author of the writings which he signed "Stendhal."

Climbing the Alps in the footsteps of Hannibal and Charlemagne was an army led by a demigod, who flung it in a mad, fantastic thrust at Milan, and on to Marengo—in Hazlitt's words "the most poetical of his battles." What an adventure for a boy like Beyle! His was a hypersensitive mind, an eye of photographic quickness. And yet, thirty-six years later, when he "fixed" in the fluid of his graphic prose the pictures gathered during that eventful spring, the clearest and strongest impressions which he had retained were not of his "baptism by fire"; not of the little general on mule-back taking personal command to elude the enemy's guns at Fort Bard; not of the perils on that narrow road overhanging the steep, when all riders were ordered to walk by the side of their horses and hold the reins with only two fingers, so that they could let go instantly and save themselves if the frightened animals stumbled and dashed down the precipice.

What Beyle remembered most vividly, at the time he wrote "La vie de Henri Brulard," was Rolle—with the magnificent lake beneath—and that exquisite moment of reverie when he

felt the presence of Jean Jacques' spirit, while the tolling of a "majestic bell" came from over the hills and gave to his thoughts "*une physionomie sublime*." But even this experience paled in his memory before the incident that crowned the descent into the flowering Val d'Aosta. It was the evening of his arrival at Ivrea. The Alps and their terrors lay behind him. A dust-covered and tired and impatient soldatesca thronged the town's one theatre. Young Beyle hungered for music. The opera that night—new to him—was Cimarosa's "*Il Matrimonio segreto*." And how it delighted him! Not the snowy heights, not the grandeur and horror of war had so moved him, as did the orchestra and the singers, and this fresh, scintillating score. (Nor was his "god-like happiness" to be diminished by the fact that the pretty creature who sang the part of Carolina lacked a front tooth. Quite the contrary: on the morrow he was in love with her.) The music cast enchantment over everything. The stuffy hall, the noisy audience, were forgotten. Innocent gayety, musical charm, vocal *bravura*, combined to shut out the steady rumble of passing ordnance. In that hour and place even Rousseau dwindled to the size of a mere pedant, while "all in Cimarosa was divine."

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Beyle had what we would call to-day the Cimarosa-complex. Not that he was one-sided or shallow in his taste and interest. He worshipped Shakespeare, adored Mozart, and wrote a glowing life of Rossini. But Cimarosa, ever since that night at Ivrea, represented to him the quintessence of Latin grace, color, and exuberance—the warmth of his foster-land, Italy. The native of Grenoble who styled himself by preference *Arrigo Beyle Milanese* went so far as seriously to wish that Cimarosa, and not Mozart, had composed "*Le Nozze di Figaro*."

That Beyle, after conquering the Alps, should have capitulated to Cimarosa, is perfectly understandable. This music brought the welcome, the only possible release from an almost unbearable tension of weeks. Considered as book and as music, the joint work of Bertati and Cimarosa had few rivals. When it was performed for the first time on February 7, 1792, at Vienna, Emperor Leopold insisted upon the opera being repeated, from beginning to end, after the musicians had been duly regaled with food and drink. The instance is unique. Success accompanied the opera everywhere. It had a long and triumphant career.

Occasionally revived, it has not been permitted to drop into utter oblivion. The quartet in the first act alone would warrant a revival even to-day; more so perhaps than ever. For the Cimarosa-complex is always with us. It is one of nature's safety devices. The "Matrimonio," well sung and acted, might still induce in some of us a "god-like happiness" and bring comfort to those who are out of breath keeping pace with the progress of music. Not many years ago, the attempt to halt this progress, or to divert it toward another point of the compass, resulted in a curious attempt to invest the immortal soul of Bertati's comedy with a new musical body. But the attempted reincarnation is remembered only as a brilliant failure and for the circumstances that brought it on. It was the hopeless endeavor of Heinrich Köselitz to furnish Friedrich Nietzsche with a "*Wagner-Ersatz*."

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The letters of Köselitz to Nietzsche were printed in 1923, five years after his death at the age of sixty-four, and fifteen years after the other side of the correspondence had been published by him in the philosopher's complete works. Now the record of this friendship, this "love on the rebound" from Wagner, lies fully opened before us—with precious indications left to be read between the lines.

Köselitz did not think his patronymic to be the sort that invited renown or suggested genius. He adopted the pen-name "Peter Gast." It can be found in some of the musical encyclopedias. On programs it no longer appears. The music of Gast is dead. Or rather it was stillborn. Yet its composer—at one time—had expected, and Nietzsche had possibly hoped, that it would usher in a calm and radiant dawn in music, after the "Götzendämmerung" was supposed to have closed the turbulent, sultry day of Richard Wagner.

A long and profitable review could be devoted to the two volumes of "Peter Gast's letters to Nietzsche" (Munich, Verlag der Nietzsche-Gesellschaft). They contain a mass of interesting material—interesting to the musical historian, to the student of Nietzsche, but especially to the psychologist. No "triangle" in story or drama has ever marked such a crossing of passions as is here revealed in the world of ideas. But they were ideas with passionate motives. Their complexity is that of the human emotions. Only a shrewd psychologist could determine, even approximately, how much of Nietzsche's eventual recoil from

Wagner was due to an irreconcilable difference in artistic conceptions and philosophic theories, how much of it was due to Wagner's inability or unwillingness to comprehend the sublimation of Nietzsche's "Liebesbedürfnis," except in so far as the young philosopher's ardor could be converted into serviceable propaganda for the cause of the superbly vain and selfish *Meister*.

Nietzsche, from an adoring apostle of Wagner, turned benevolent mentor to Köselitz. The yearning for a *Wagner-Ersatz* brought into the world, not puny "Peter Gast," but "Superman." Yet Richard Wagner remained the superhuman figure towering in the background of this correspondence between Nietzsche and his amanuensis. Köselitz was privileged to copy in his own neat hand many of Nietzsche's pages, to suggest changes and make corrections, as he read the proofs of practically every word that Nietzsche wrote from the winter of 1877 until the tragic collapse.

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On March 22, 1881, writing from Venice—where he spent most of his time—Gast acknowledges to Nietzsche the receipt of "two books by Stendhal." On March 31 he writes: "Stendhal refers so often to Cimarosa that I must have a look at 'Il Matrimonio segreto.'" Gast is anxious to try his hand at an opera. His ambition is to be an "allegro-musician," a composer of sparkling, tuneful music. That is what the times demand and await! He conceives the idea of setting anew the libretto of the "Matrimonio." But he shrinks from so daring a venture. A letter dated June 8, 1881, announces that he has given up the idea. Then on September 28, he writes: "I've decided definitely on the *Matrimonio*." From now on we watch the growth of the work. It is slow, it is accompanied by pangs and doubts. How much of kindly deception is hidden in the correspondence between these two men, for the sake of mutual affection and consolation? Gast graduates from an amanuensis to a friend because of his determination to accomplish more than the miracle of the Grail: to close the wound in Nietzsche's heart with the balm of a "new music," a music of smiles and sunshine. Nietzsche is ever ready with encouragement. As the result of one brief, stimulating note, Gast finds "the impetus to sketch out the ninth version of an overture" for his opera! Gast is aware of his limitations. He is forced to the pathetic confession: "My will is as close to yours, as my ability remains far behind." But Nietzsche can no longer get on without Gast. The help of the disciple, the belief in the

disciple's future, have become almost equally indispensable. And Peter Gast has earned his place in the history of human thought by his devotion to the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century. His Cimarosa opera, "Der Löwe von Venedig," given but once, on January 15, 1891, at Danzig, stands out as one of music's brilliant failures.

One day in Vienna, when Gast played some light and frivolous tunes of his composition for Konrad von Zdekauer, the latter said to Gast: "That's all very nice. But now try to write a regular five-hundred-swine melody! You simply can't. That is denied to you!" Which means that even the lowest type of music must be the best a man can do, not his worst; must be "written up" rather than down, in order to be popular. The bandwagon can not be run far or fast with an engine of less than 500 Hog-Power.

Peter Gast was disappointed in his hope of being the Messianic "allegro-musician." He sensed the need of one; and the need persists, to-day as much as ever. We have plenty of "allegretto-ma-non-troppo musicians," and not a few who mistake hysteria, irony, grotesqueness, and even vulgarity, for Dionysian *allegrezza*. The manufacture of *Ersatz* in music has developed into a thriving industry. The Pilgrims' Chorus, Charlestoned and murdered, shows how thorough are some of its methods. Old Phoenix is not given a chance for self-immolation; he is burned at the stake. Great, general, and unfeigned is the annoyance, if the ashes cool without sending forth a rejuvenated bird.

But there is no cause for worry. The Cimarosa-complex brings relief, sooner or later. Malipiero's recent "Cimarosiana" is a symptom worth noting. Meanwhile we are mildly amused by the spectacle of those who indulge in a little flirtation with the past; or we are abundantly horrified by criminal assaults upon the future. Incidentally, the jazzophile and the jazzophobe add their voices to the swelling choir of disagreement. Be that as it will, history teaches us that in reality all such divergent efforts unite toward the seeking of a way out, a continuation; or the finding of an *Ersatz* which is not only substitute for, but improvement over the thing that has either become too elaborate and complicated, or reached the point of saturation.

Thus we are witnessing related manifestations in such widely differing works as the piano concertos of Sig. Respighi and Mr. Gershwin. The one goes back for inspiration to the ancient chant of the Catholic Church, the other steps out jauntily to the tunes of our modern dance hall and that national institution, the

"Follies." There can be no doubt as to which of these two works is the more original, even if it be the less finished achievement, as concerns technic. Why to borrow material for a piano concerto from Mr. Flo Ziegfeld and the American Beauty Chorus should be thought more incongruous than to ask it of Gregory the Great and the Roman Antiphony, is not readily discernible. Youthful pulchritude fills an important place beside antique grandeur.

Mr. Gershwin has written not only a very courageous, but also a very creditable work—creditability especially because his jazz-concerto does not contain a trace of the vulgar. There are inevitably stretches that reveal a lack of experience and resourcefulness, others that are uninteresting and made of stuff as mediocre as any well-behaved and dry-as-dust conservative can roll off by the yard. The merit and the promise of this composition lie in the portions that are distinctly poetical; in the orchestral coloring, that is often piquant without ever being offensive; but chiefly in the general tenor, which is unquestionably new of a newness to be found nowhere except in these United States. If the dance-rhythms employed by Mr. Gershwin occasionally fail to excite the listener, it is because they are a trifle too persistent, or not reckless enough. In themselves these rhythms have nothing that should bar them from marrying into the proud old family of the concertos and symphonies, which are inclined to forget conveniently their early and somewhat low-born origin. An addition of a little red blood has often saved the weakened blue.

At all times men have clamored against cross-breeding in art as a foredoomed *mésalliance*. Experience has taught them nothing. They cling to their prejudices more tenaciously than does the miser to his gold. It is hardly believable that so late as the end of the eighteenth century there were people who strenuously objected to the inclusion of a minuet in a symphony or a work of chamber music. They denounced it as an unpardonable outrage. In the "*Musikalisches Wochenblatt*" for the year 1791 you will find an article by Karl Spazier, in the course of which the esteemed composer, prolific journalist, and *Hofrath* to boot, expresses himself as follows: "I furthermore hold that minuets are contrary to good effect because, if they are composed straightforward in that form, they remind us inevitably and painfully of the dance-hall and the abuses of music, while, if they are caricatured—as is often done by Haydn and Pleyel—they incite laughter."

If the passage calls for any comment, it is this: Spazier lived in a day when minuets had been done to death, when they were as



common as are fox-trots with us. Minuets were a part of "popular" music. The butcher's boy whistled them, the elderly maiden lady sobbed to their accompaniment. As the many dance-collections of the period amply show, the majority of these minuets was musically beneath contempt. For every fine and spirited minuet that has come down to us in the works of the masters, there must have been a thousand cheap and vapid minuets which have been mercifully swallowed by insatiable Time. But before they disappeared they had their hour of rampant, exasperating life. Their quantity and quality might well have driven to despair and remonstrance a soul less fussy and genteel than that of the irate *Hofrath*.

True to form, the learned arbiters of the press have on the whole been none too kind to Mr. Gershwin. They have written in terms almost identical with those of Herr Spazier. Again they have spoken harshly of the unspeakable jazz. The appellation damns the thing. And those, too, damn it who drag it the length and breadth of the land with circus tricks and the hip movements of corpulent bagnio (not banjo) performers. There is jazz and jazz, as there were minuets and minuets. Also there are still "jazz-bands"—perish the thought of them!—and there are springing up more and more groups of first-class musicians who specialize in an artistic and often exquisite manner of playing popular American music. Perhaps the story of an encounter with one such group bears telling.

Prefatorily be it said that the Library of Congress, last autumn, vainly tried to obtain a celesta, called for in the performance of a new work by a well-known composer. No celesta could be bought, hired or stolen within two hundred miles from Capitol Hill. Orchestral organizations within that radius, fortunate enough to own a specimen of the breed, found excuses for not parting with their treasures even from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. A "marimba" had to take the place of the celesta. Four weeks later "your viewer and reviewer" together with said well-known composer happened to be in Chicago, when one night they went to the little grill-room of a fashionable hotel, the attraction being a small band of dance-players. Six men: two fiddlers, one pianist, one banjo player, one drummer, and one man alternating between the saxophone and the clarinet. But he was not the only double-barreled shot. The second fiddler would lay aside his instrument for eight or sixteen measures and make a half-turn on his chair to play upon—a celesta! The first shock was almost too much to bear.

There were few dancers (Praise be to Allah!), and they obligingly left early. With the personal contact between the players and the two listeners established, the occasion soon took on the form of a private concert. It lasted for a considerable time, which passed too quickly, while tune followed tune in charming variety, ingenious harmonization, and the most tasteful execution. The musicianship of the "obbligati" improvised by the different players was truly astonishing. There was no noise, no stolid, unyielding rhythm. There was refinement of tone and constant flexibility. This is the wondrous tale of the babes that were lost in the jazz-woods of wicked Chicago, the center of American Art. And the next time the National Library requires the loan of a celesta—it has been assured that distance shall be no obstacle.

You must whisper softly still when you dare suggest that at last America has a music all its own, and that it really amounts to a musical art. This art had its roots just where it was to be expected—not at the top, in the Hermetic circles of New Music Societies, Manuscript Societies, Associations for the Promotion of Native Talent, and the like, but at the bottom, in the street. The execrable performances that have forever branded the term "jazz" with the odium of a scourge, are falling off. The new art, the new musical idiom, which is forming, cries out for a new name. It should be a name that does not, like the present one, describe only the one side of the medal which is gradually and happily turning from view.

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If at the end of the present musical transformation our finished home-product should bear fewer Negro traits than marked its noisier beginnings, there is enough real merit, undisputed glory left for the colored race to claim an independent and prominent share in the development of American music. To deny this would be preposterous. To insist upon more would be equally senseless.

Unfortunately, the moment that any critical estimate of the musical part played by the Negro deviates in the slightest degree from the path of unqualified praise, it is suspected of being warped by racial prejudice. There is a very fine, a very plausible reason for the desire to make good some of the many injustices which the Negro has suffered, by giving him credit for not only all the wonderful things he has done, but more. Yet in the end that method can render a disservice only. For it is apt to retard still

further the sober attitude of self-critical discipline in a people preëminently endowed with emotional exuberance and artistic instincts. Among these instincts the one for music is the most remarkable. In properly emphasizing the value of this priceless gift, it is difficult to know just where to stop; and therefore it does not surprise that we should meet—especially in the writings of the Negro himself—with statements which sometimes overrun the line of caution so far as to become extravagant.

In recent years the serious application to the collecting and recording of Negro melodies has made great strides. After the long and indiscriminate exploitation of the dance-tunes and "comical" songs of the colored race, the world is learning to appreciate the deeper and more spiritual side of the Negro's musical talent. In 1867 William Francis Allen published his "Slave Songs of the United States," in the preface to which we find one of the earliest descriptions of the Negro's religious songs or "sperichils." Allen thought that the first reference in print to these songs appeared in a letter from Lucy McKim, published in "Dwight's Journal of Music," November 8, 1862. Miss McKim was the daughter of an agent of the Port Royal Relief Society. But as early an issue of "Dwight's" as that of November 15, 1856, has an article on the "Songs of the Black," signed "Evangelist," which contains the following passage: ". . . it is in religion that the African pours out his whole voice and soul. A child in intellect, he is a child in faith. All the revelations of the Bible have to him a startling vividness, and he will sing of the judgment and the resurrection with a terror or a triumph which cannot be concealed. . . . As hundreds assemble at a camp-meeting in the woods, and join in the chorus of such a hymn as

When I can read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies,

the unimpassioned hearer is almost lifted from his feet by the volume and majesty of the sound."

The Civil War gave a strong impetus to the interest in anything that concerned the Negro. His music spread rapidly, thanks to the "Jubilee Songs" of Fisk and the "Cabin and Plantation Songs" of Hampton. But not until the beginning of the present century did his "spirituals" establish themselves as *solo* songs; perhaps they would have had to wait longer, had it not been for one of the foremost colored musicians, that accomplished singer, Mr. H. T. Burleigh.

Of late the "spirituals" have acquired a veritable vogue. They are now a fixed part of any well-ordered song-program. Therefore a wide and eager demand should greet "The Book of American Negro Spirituals" which The Viking Press has recently issued. The songs are wisely chosen, as regards the intrinsic beauty of the melodies and contrast of moods. The editor of the volume is Mr. James Weldon Johnson; the "musical arrangements" are the work of Mr. J. Rosamond Johnson and Mr. Lawrence Brown—three names which inspire an uncommon degree of confidence. The editor's preface of forty pages—an important feature of the book—starts full of promise. Very soon the reader discovers that he is in court.

Mr. Johnson's preface is a plea; it is intended to support the case of the Negro *vs.* the White Man in music. That in itself is a legitimate proceeding. What might be objected to by a thoughtful reader—and one thoroughly disposed to decide the case in favor of the pleader's client—is the sort of evidence adduced. The reader finds himself confronted, not with a clear and logical presentation of provable facts, but with a mixture of popular theories and vague or fanciful claims. Instead of being founded upon firmly knit, convincing arguments, the success of the case dangles by the loose ends of specious oratory. At best, the reading jury will disagree. What a pity!—for it seems that a cooler and shrewder summing up would have resulted in a unanimous vote of vindication with an award of damages.

Mr. Johnson is an able spokesman, a delightful writer; and one regrets the more to have one's literary pleasure in his preface spoiled by frequent promptings to "check up" his various affirmations. Mr. Johnson's main contention is of course not new: that the Negro spirituals are an absolutely original creation of the colored folk and owe nothing to the contact of the African slaves with the white settlers of America. Would it subtract anything from the marvel of these unique songs if we should be content to recognize merely what the Negro has done in modifying and transforming acquired elements, in blending them with inherited conceptions, until they turned into a new, a personal and inimitable expression of his own? Surely not.

The Negroes of Africa—even those who have been the privileged recipients of visits from white missionaries—are not known to indulge in spirituals, or in any other species of song directly resembling the chants of their Christianized brothers in America. Let us cheerfully admit that no white man could have conceived the words and tunes of the spirituals. Then let us go a step

further and admit that no Negro could have created the spirituals without a contact, not only with the Christianity of the white man, but more especially with the musical manifestations of that Christianity peculiar to the early Dutch and Anglo-Saxon colonists. It is rather important to bear in mind what sort of men these early settlers were.

Mr. Johnson writes: "The statement that the spirituals are imitations made by the Negro of music that he heard is an absurdity. What music did American Negroes hear to imitate?" Behold the orator pause and sweep the audience with a look of challenge, satisfied that no answer to his question can possibly forthcome. One hesitates to break into the discourse at this dramatic point and remind the pleader that there were few people more fervently addicted to psalmody, and all it implied, than were the Protestant settlers, Dutch and English, who began to import African natives about the middle of the seventeenth century. The singing of hymns constituted for a long time the chief diversion of these pious adventurers. They probably needed all the religious "whistling" they could do, to keep up their courage in the face of hardships and perils daily renewed.

Nobody says that the tune of this or that Negro spiritual can be found in Ainsworth or Sternhold and Hopkins. Nobody suggests that anything like the often amazingly profound and beautiful Negro verses existed in the Bay Psalm Book or its numerous successors. But the musical prototype was there; and the bewildering imagery, the florid circumlocutions of those old hymns had a direct bearing on the manner in which the Negro converts sang of their faith and hope in the new God they learned to worship—a God whose heavenly paradise was assumed to make up for what the earthly lot of a slave was lacking in cheer and comfort. The slave's white master himself was not always a very cheerful person. He indulged at home and in church in a plentiful dose of more or less mournful litany which, notwithstanding its doubtful musical excellence, Mr. Johnson must allow us to call music. In the nature of things, it would have been infinitely more difficult for the early Negro to copy literally this "sacred music" and these stilted verses, than it was for him to recreate them freely and spontaneously. It was a great good fortune that the Negro did not make of this music another brand of Christian hymns, but enriched it with something he had inherited from his pagan ancestry, with the potent and not so distant recollections of the rituals that accompanied the festivals of the tribe, the increase to the family, the preparations for battle, the advent of spring,

the mystery of death—the whole primitive, fierce life and struggle in the dark continent.

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Almost simultaneously with Mr. Johnson's volume, there has been published a collection entitled "Mellows" by R. Emmet Kennedy (A. & C. Boni). The author of this collection holds that the spirituals are "an original lyrical creation of the Afro-American mind evolved in this country." This does not prevent Mr. Kennedy from remarking, very justly, in connection with such a tune as "Po' Li'l Jesus," that "the general mold of the melody is so reminiscent of the Gregorian chant that it may not be unreasonable to assume it is due to the influence of Roman Catholicism, the religion of Creole Louisiana, and the religion adopted by many of the Negroes of the Creole plantations."

A comparison between the Johnson and Kennedy collections, so opportunely brought out at the same time, offers food for salutary reflection. Mr. Kennedy in most cases quotes chapter and verse, that is, the name of the Negro or Negroes who sang for him the different versions of the tunes he records. And the reminiscences or anecdotes that accompany each song are not the least valuable or attractive part of the book.

Mr. Johnson, too, is backing his side with quotations from "authorities." Only in fitting the opinions of others into the structure of his argument, the statements quoted gain sometimes a little in latitude or change a trifle in direction. Thus Mr. Krehbiel wrote in his book on the "Afro-American Folksongs" that the rhythm of the Habanera—alleged to be of African origin—as a dance, "is not vocal, but its form has been used most charmingly in vocal music, and in two of its manifestations, Carmen's air in the first scene of Bizet's opera and the Mexican song 'Paloma,' it is universally known." Whereupon Mr. Johnson bravely asserts that a "*considerable portion* of Bizet's opera, Carmen, is based on this originally African rhythm!" Which brings to mind a concert given several years ago in Jordan Hall, Boston, by colored musicians as a testimonial for the family of the late Coleridge-Taylor, at which the speaker of the evening, in enumerating the men of signal accomplishments whom the colored race had produced, gave his hearers to understand that not only the violinist Bridgewater was of African descent, but that a drop of Negro blood flowed also in the veins of the violinist's great friend, Ludwig van Beethoven!



A number of Negro spirituals have a pathos and beauty which can not help but move any listener, regardless of color. Mr. Johnson is right in dwelling on this fact when he speaks of the Negro's nobility of soul. No one will gainsay him. But when he declares that "there is not a nobler theme in the whole musical literature of the world" than "Go down Moses," one wonders just a little how much of the world's musical literature Mr. Johnson knows or how much of it he expects his readers to have forgotten. Inaccuracy, however, could not well go farther than when he calls the spirituals "America's only folk-music, and up to this time, the finest distinctive artistic contribution she has to offer the world."

Here is an example of how a thoroughly trained mind, capable of the clearest reasoning, can lose itself occasionally in the fog of partisanship. The Negro spiritual, according to Mr. Johnson, would have accomplished the miracle of combining and converting into synonyms, what have heretofore been regarded as two very different and strictly opposite types and terms of musical expression: the folk-song and the art-song. If it is claimed that the spiritual is a folk-song, it can not well be at the same time "an artistic contribution" to music. If it is an art-song, or has come under the dubious influence of the artistic "arranger," it ceases to be a genuine folk-song. It is no longer an ethnological exhibit, pure and authentic, but a sociological phenomenon, hybrid and artificial.

Unwittingly Mr. Johnson has laid bare the only fault one can find with most of the Negro spirituals as they are being published to-day, a fault strongly in evidence in the "musical arrangements" which Mr. J. Rosamond Johnson and Mr. Lawrence Brown have contributed to Mr. James W. Johnson's own collection.

More accurate and guarded than Mr. Johnson is Dr. Alain Locke, who, in his book on "The New Negro," writes: "At present the Spirituals are at a very difficult point in their musical career; for the moment they are caught in the transitional stage between a folk form and an art form." They are caught, indeed. And even should they be liberated and seemingly advance, will they have really gained? Leaving the future to decide that question, one thing is certain now: that whatever the ultimate result, it will be obtained at a sacrifice of what is purely and authentically Negro. The very "art-forms" into which the spirituals are being forced to-day are devices, and not always happy ones, of the white man. The original spirituals were often

marvellous, always spontaneous outbursts of a naïve but inspired race, endowed with the imaginative power of instinctive and infallible genius. In their modern transformation and prettified adaptation they bear the earmarks of self-conscious uncertainty, and often sink to the level of groping mediocrity.

If anything, the transition—in its latest phase—is headed the wrong way. Compare some of the elaborate “arrangements” of Messrs. Johnson and Brown with the simple but characteristic accompaniments of Mr. H. T. Burleigh, and compare them above all with the treatment of the spirituals in the Hampton collection. Even a man like Mr. Krehbiel, who could not pretend to the “Negro-feeling” that Messrs. Johnson and Brown should possess, did infinitely better by “Nobody knows the trouble I see” (page 96 of his book) than did they (page 140 of theirs). Compare “What yo’ gwine t’do when de lamp burn down” in the Johnson collection with the version of it given in the Hampton collection. That single example would suffice to show what changes the parlorized and “transplatformed” spiritual undergoes. Messrs. Johnson and Brown (in this as in practically all of their arrangements) deliberately go to work and *double the note-values* of the melody. The nervous, breathlessly enquiring song—divided between the leader and the chorus—as it appears in the Hampton collection, becomes in the Johnsonian version a pedestrian ballad, marked “Slowly, with meditation.” The primitive, frenzied eagerness of the crowd is perverted into a mannered and introspective soliloquy. Compare the “Crucifixion” in the Johnson collection with “He never said a mumblin’ word” as recorded and harmonized by Mr. Kennedy in his “Mellows.” Which is the more genuinely Negro of the two? Read what Mr. Kennedy has to say of George Riley, the Baptist Negro—who went out to see the “Sun dance” on Easter morning—and his way of singing the song with “a feeling of adulation rather than a feeling of commiseration.” Look at Mr. Kennedy’s version, with its lilting eighth- and sixteenth-notes—expressive of the loving solicitude for the martyred Lord and of the frank astonishment and pride that he should have suffered without ever saying “a mumblin’ word.” You can almost hear the Negro’s ecstatic chuckle as he glories in the thought of a Lord who is a hero, who suffers in silence—as philosophical George himself perhaps must do occasionally. And then look at the arrangement of the song by Mr. J. Rosamond Johnson, dedicated to that extraordinary artist, Mr. Roland Hayes. It is intended to be delivered solemnly; the song, in its “art-form,” with its augmented note values, invites dramatization,

calls for the intensified presentment on the stage. But it has lost every trace of simplicity and subtlety.

Much more could be said about these interesting songs and the changes they are undergoing; about the harmonizations, reputed to be rich in "bizarre" effects peculiar to the colored musician—which is not always a satisfactory explanation of the "faulty" harmonies that the white ear detects in the misapplication of white formulas or the ignoring of white rules. These harmonies are bizarre in the sense in which ungrammatical speech can strike us as bizarre.

This review does not pretend to be exhaustive. In order to be that it would have to do more even than take up, one after the other, all the debatable points in Mr. James Weldon Johnson's collection. It would have to draw into the debate such works as "The Negro and his Songs" by Prof. Howard W. Odum and Mr. Guy B. Johnson of the University of North Carolina (issued by the press of that university) and "On the Trail of Negro Folk Songs" by Dorothy Scarborough, assisted by Ola Lee Gullledge (Harvard University Press), both published in 1925. The book by the Carolina professors contains not a note of music. But it comes nearest to a scientific treatment of the historical and social aspects of the question. The book by the two ladies is eminently feminine, hence caparisoned with charms and graces, though a little more effusive than rigorously methodical. However it contains many interesting tunes which the authors wisely refrain from harmonizing.

It is known that colored people, if sufficiently urged by white "investigators," will sometimes seek to shake off their pitiless inquisitors by jumbling together bits of sundry remembered tunes and words, and thus make up "Negro folk-songs" on the spot—which subsequently are hailed as rare finds of hitherto unknown "variants." The nature of some of these variants (and the number of white "contributors") leads one to suspect that—in their feverish desire to enrich the store of a momentarily "fashionable" form of poetry—even white people occasionally, and unconsciously, are carried to bardic pinnacles of colored utterance. The danger of imitation now is twofold. All the more reason for cautious sifting.

There is a crying need for an unbiased, scientific research in the wide and fertile fields of American music which have produced no fruit of more distinctive savor than the spiritual of the Negro. Not enough of these singularly touching songs can be gathered and preserved. When authentic, they are imbued with

what is noblest, most aspiring, and characteristic in a great race.

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## NOTE

The editor of *THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY* will appreciate it if American readers who own autograph letters of Beethoven, or know of the ownership of such letters in America, will kindly notify him without delay.

